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CHRISTIANITY

AN INTERPRETATION

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By

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NO. 1

TO MY GOOD FRIEND

SIR WILLIAM MATHER

DOCTOR OF LAWS; PRIVY COUNCILLOR

WITH GRATEFUL AFFECTION

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ARE WE STILL CHRISTIAN?

"The highest duty is to determine what is of permanent value; not to cleave to words, but to find out what is essential. The 'whole' Christ, the 'whole' Gospel, if we mean by this the external image taken in all its details and set up for imitation, is just as bad and deceptive a shibboleth as the 'whole' Luther and the like. It is bad because it enslaves us, and it is deceptive because the people who proclaim it do not take it seriously, and could not do so if they tried. They cannot do so because they cannot cease to feel, understand, and judge as children of their age".—HARNACK.

I

ARE WE STILL CHRISTIAN?

More than fifty years ago Dr. Strauss asked this question in a volume which aroused in the religious world much interest and more indignation. The mere suggestion was an insult. It was to accuse the Christian world of hypocrisy or stupidity. The writer was denounced as would be one who had aspersed the chastity of his mother.

To-day the question is being asked by multitudes. But not in the same spirit. Professor Harnack's "What is Christianity?" is the fifty years belated response to Strauss. For if "Christianity" be what Strauss and his denouncers conceived it to be, it has already to a great extent disappeared and bids fair to be left behind, a stupendous but pathetic ruin, like many an ancient city in which men one time dwelt.

As I look out to sea from where I write my eye rests upon the massive walls of a mediæval monastery, standing in the middle of an island. The island was once of many times its present area, but little by little the sea has reduced its compass. Sometimes by a long period of gnawing and nibbling about its edges, sometimes by mighty storms engulfing huge segments. The castle stands in the midst of an ever-

lessening area. I speculate as to whether it will be ever overwhelmed? and when? And are the same mighty forces which are obliterating it building up islands elsewhere upon which generations of men still to come will erect other structures of like purpose? And will they in their turn pass in the endless succession of the ages?

Is Christianity founded upon a rock? If so, what ground do its walls really enclose? And what outbuildings may be washed away before the impregnable wall be reached?

During many ages the Church busied herself in what " safe " men love to call constructive work. To the very small and simple body of religious belief with which it started it added first one, then another, and another:—The Resurrection of the Body; the Descent into Hell; the Trinity; Sacramental Grace; the Real Presence; the Virgin Birth; the Doctrine of the Atonement; the Fall of Man;—then, after a long interval, the Inspiration of Scripture; Justification by Faith; and finally, the Infallibility of the Pope,—all of which, it has been maintained, " except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved ". It is now nearly a century since this process of dogma-making ceased. Since then only two new ones have possessed sufficient vitality to organize a body about them,—Mormonism and Christian Science. So far as the world to-day has any interest in religious doctrines, it is not to propound or maintain them but to examine and dismiss them. This process has

already gone far, much farther than is generally realized. Dogmas which fifty years ago were asserted and generally believed to be essential to the Christian faith have been so completely dismissed and forgotten that the average man finds it difficult to believe that men were ever willing to fight, much less to suffer for them. Yet within the memory of many of us Mr. Gladstone was battling for the literal truth of the story of creation in Genesis; Bishop Colenso was excommunicated for questioning the details of the exodus from Egypt; the Dean of St. Paul's was maintaining that "if every book, every word, every syllable" of Holy Scripture were not inspired and inerrant, the foundation was gone from under the Christian religion; one of the greatest scholars of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland was deposed for teaching that the "Mosaic System" was not in effect until after the Exile; and an equally eminent and godly minister of the same Church in America was dismissed for asserting that the book of Isaiah was a composite, and not the work of one inspired man. All this, really so recent, seems as remote as the dark ages. Now, even the Westminster Confession and the Thirty-nine Articles are never heard of and never cared about save when at an ecclesiastical council the question of their formal retention or rejection is mooted. The newspapers no longer report such matters. The Reviews no longer open their pages to such discussions. They are no longer interesting. Would the editor of the *Nine-*

teenth Century to-day give space to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Huxley to debate about the Gaderene swine?—allowing that men equally gifted were willing to spend their time upon such a controversy.

This disintegration of dogmas is going steadily on. They have not been disproved or formally rejected, but simply worn away, as the rising tide dissolves the edges of a sandy shore. The question which now interests us is, How far will this process go? and when will it be stayed? The world will never be without a religion. That syncretism of historic reality, pagan cult, Roman jurisprudence, Greek speculation, Teutonic gloom, and ethnic emotion which we call "Christianity" has long satisfied the needs of men. It cannot go on doing so without modifications so fundamental that one hesitates to even suggest them.

It is a condition for existence of a religion that it must satisfy the moral, intellectual, social needs of its time. This Christianity as it has long been presented has largely ceased to do. The ethical sense of the modern world reached a point a good while ago at which it began to condemn large portions of the Old Testament story. Actions there represented as having been done by the command or with the approval of God are now pronounced immoral. Miriam's song of triumph is the gloating of a savage chieftainess over her enemies dead. Jael beguiles Sisera by the proffer of hospitality, lies to him, treacherously murders him, and bursts into a pæan

of praise to God. By his command the Canaanites are massacred, men, women, and innocent babes; Agag is hewn to pieces; the priests of Baal are slaughtered by the prophet; Jacob robs his brother, deceives his father, and therefore wins the divine benediction,—and so on. The imprecatory Psalms cannot be read now without a shudder. The old defence, "may not God do what he will with his own?" no longer serves. Men cannot worship a god who is not better than they are themselves. It is true that we have come to see that the Old Testament story is the more true for its record of these things. It represents men and times as controlled by the ethical standards which had been reached at that stage of moral evolution. But it must be seen that in proportion as it does so it displaces the Bible from the position of universal authority which it has occupied for so long.

In the same way the moral demand of the modern world begins to show uneasiness in presence of the New Testament as well. It is seriously questioned whether the "other worldliness" so exalted there is compatible with the maintenance of good citizenship, or indeed with any social order whatever. The injunction to "resist not evil", to "hate father and mother", to "take no thought for the morrow", to "sell all you have and give to the poor", and the like, are regarded with serious doubt. Were they meant as practical rules of conduct for a stable society, or were they the exhortations of those who believed themselves part of the company of a ship-

wrecked world soon to be broken up and engulfed? It cannot be denied that the practical code of the earliest Christian age was moulded with reference to the world view then prevalent.

"Not only is no recognition given to art and letters, but even the relations of domestic life are discouraged. The slave is dissuaded from care about his liberty, on the express ground that it is not worth while on the brink of a great catastrophe to assume any new position, or commit the heart by new ties. The time is too short, the crisis too near for the career of a free life or the building of a human home. It is better for every one to continue as he is; and instead of waiting to have the world perish from him to regard himself as already dead to the world. As seen from their point of view all temporal claims sink into negation. The constitutions, the arts, the culture of civilized nations were about to be superseded and the Christian needed only such provisional arrangements as might serve during the world's brief respite. Equally natural and suitable to their conceived position was the non-resistance principles of the early disciples. What right could be worth contending for on the dawn of a great day of redress when every wrong would be brought to its account? Who would carry a cause before Dikast or Proconsul when Eternal Justice was pledged to hear it to-morrow? When the great assizes of the universe are about to be opened it were a poor thing for the suitors to begin fighting in the vestibule."

Here, again, a more enlightened and just study of history has turned the point of the objection. The fact has come to be recognized that the early Christians as well as Jesus himself did expect the speedy if not immediate " restitution of all things ", and did square their living and teaching by that belief. This does undoubtedly bring relief from a sense of obligation to observe injunctions which are at the same time felt to be both impracticable and dangerous. But it must be seen once more that it breaks down that absolute and universal authority once allowed to the New Testament.

Thus the ethical needs of the stage at which we are has brought its powerful reinforcement to the spirit of scientific investigation in examining the origins of Christianity. It is true that the mass of believers go on believing and of preachers go on preaching and of teachers go on teaching as though nothing had occurred. This will always be so. Mistaken beliefs, beliefs which have grown and spread until their branches fill the air, die always at the root. The branches may appear green and vigorous for many a day after the nourishing juices have ceased to rise. The dogma of " Inspiration ", whose place among Christian doctrines was always illegitimate,—together with its attendant obscurantism, superstition, and bibliolatry, must be regarded as among the structures of sandy foundation which the tides of time have already disintegrated.

Again, the conscience and the intelligence of our

time have joined together to push from its place a dogma far more ancient than that of Inspiration, viz., the " Fall of Man ". Indeed it may be said that this doctrine is the substructure of every " system " of theology formulated within the last fifteen centuries. It is assumed even now that it accounts for the fact that " the word was made flesh ". Nevertheless conscience repudiates it; science shows its impossibility.

The existence of moral evil is a melancholy fact, and there are many theories to account for its presence. According to the one before us, there was, long ago, a primeval world which was a paradise. It had a genial climate and a fertile soil. No ice-bound oceans or burning deserts, no thorns or brambles, no predacious beast or pestilential wind was there. The world was young and wholesome. No nerve had ever thrilled with pain nor any living creature seen the face of Death. In this paradise God walked and was lonely. In it he set the newly fashioned Adam, the first individual of his race. Into his arms he graciously gave the maiden mother of us all. He created them immortal. Their wisdom was transcendent, their goodness absolute.

With Adam God made a " covenant ". The matter of agreement was that perfect obedience and unbroken righteousness would be rewarded by continual bliss and warranty against pain and death, and that for disobedience the penalty should be capital. In this covenant, moreover, Adam did not act for himself alone, but as the legal representative of all his

race yet unbegotten. They were to have their chance in him, and to stand forfeit if he failed.[1] The simple test for the first man's power of moral endurance was to be his abstention from a certain attractive fruit in the garden where he dwelt. An insidious tempter appeared from some unknown and unsuspected quarter, enlisted the more pliable nature of Eve on the side of disobedience, and through her broke down the moral resistance of man. He failed in the test, and catastrophe unspeakable was let loose. Smitten suddenly with shame and fear, the offenders crept away, already moribund. The voice of God rolling in thunder revealed his hiding place. The flashing lightning of an offended heaven burned between them and their bower. The indignant earth shot up from her bosom the upas and the deadly nightshade among the forest, and choked the wheat with thorns and brambles. The wild beasts, filled for the first time with rage and hunger, rent and devoured one another. The natures of the offenders underwent a sudden ferment which left them transformed and totally depraved. Their unborn children not only inherited the taint, but were subject to all the penalties appended to the original contract broken by their father and representative.[2]

[1] Whether the covenant were to remain in force forever, or whether after a certain period of obedience man was to be confirmed in an indefeasible right of immortality, has never been agreed.

[2] At this point "Augustinians" and "Pelagians" part company.

Thus, death, physical and moral, the depravity of every son of Adam, and all the thousand ills that flesh is heir to, both in this world and in any world to come, are accounted for by that event which in popular religion and in technical theology is called the "Fall". The Prayer Book, in its wedding service, makes it the foundation of its philosophy of marriage. In the Larger Catechism appended to the Confession of Faith it is stated baldly:—"The Fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse, so that we are by nature children of wrath, bond slaves of Satan, and justly liable to all punishment in this world and the world to come". It is equally present, explicitly or implicitly, in all theological systems.

Now, whence came this notion which has so powerfully affected the religious life of the Christian world? In the Old Testament there is no after reference to it whatever. Throughout its whole record every instance of moral obliquity is referred to the deliberate and wanton choice of the person offending. His fault is never modified or the guilty quality of his nature deemed to be affected by his relation to Adam. He is in every case accounted worthy or blameworthy, not on account of what his nature is *qua* man, but for what he does of his own choice. It is also noteworthy that it is entirely unknown to Rabbinical Judaism.

It is never referred to in any form by Jesus. If what is called Christianity contained nothing but

what could be referred to his authority, its doctrinal compass would shrink amazingly. The dogma in question would never have been heard of.

What then will account for the importance allowed to a doctrine which science declares to be untrue, and against which the moral sense revolts? Its history, in rough lines, can easily be traced. When the doctrine of Vicarious Redemption had been elaborated as an interpretation of Jesus' work, logic required as its substructure a vicarious condemnation. The two arose and will disappear together. The moral progress of the race has already left them behind it. Historically it was elaborated by that great system builder, Augustine. It passed, together with the rest of his theology, into general acceptance in the Western Church. It was developed in curious detail during the busy idleness of the scholastic period. Dante popularized for the Latin peoples the story of the Edenic paradise. Milton did the same for the English-speaking race. Luther, the Augustinian monk, brought the theory with him from his cloister. Calvin, the very incarnation of legalism, made it the starting point of his system. Through these various channels it has come, since the Reformation, to be popularly accepted as the Christian belief concerning the moral nature and status of man. But while it still holds its place in doctrinal standards it has ceased to be a conviction to which one may appeal to influence conduct. What preacher would dare to assert baldly, "You deserve to be damned for your share

in Adam's disobedience"? The dogma is no longer held on the authority of Augustine, or rejected with Pelagius; it has simply fallen out of sight in consequence of its intrinsic unworthiness and essential immorality.

But if the Edenic legend does not serve as a foundation for dogma, has it then any serious significance? Is it anything more than one of the fond imaginings of a childish world? I reply, it is a compendium of that story which is writ large in the whole Hebrew-Christian scriptures,—the story of the origin and development of the moral life of man, and of God's dealing therewith. Whether it originated in Babylon or Egypt, whether from Moses or Manes, is of little consequence. The marvellous thing is the story itself. This second chapter of Genesis, like the first, moves with majestic strides, an æon in a paragraph, with space for a year of God's days between verses. It is couched in a language so oriental and so poetic that even Augustine warned against dangerous literalness in its interpretation. It first traces creation from nebulous, chaotic fire mist to the introduction of the creature fashioned in the image and likeness of the gods. This creature is called Adam, "the Man". This having been done, it recapitulates the history of creation with reference to the being in which it culminated. It refers, most briefly, to the preparation of the earth to his uses, connects him as to his physical side with matter, and then enters upon the history of the development and progress of man's

moral and religious life. This is the theme of the entire Scripture. But this progress is conceived throughout as having been by a series of *continuously recurring selections.* The first of these is in the story before us. There is no intimation that "Adam" and "Eve" were the first of the race. The Scriptural interest begins at that point in its evolution at which the moral sense appeared, the capacity "to know good and evil". Man the animal, the crown of the animals, had no doubt dwelt upon the earth for ages before. In the Edenic poem—allegory—what you will,—the spiritual history of the race commences with the first individuals in whom the moral faculty had shown itself. Who, or when, or where, is of little account. It must have been at some time,—or many times. It is a selection of the fit. In the sequel Genesis occupies itself only with those in whom this moral progression moves. Seth and his line are followed, while the other sons and daughters of Adam remain in sight only for a little way, to where they founded nations, passed through the stage of pastoral life, concentrated in cities, blossomed into art, burst into music, and then pass forever out of sight and hearing. Afterward, Abraham is selected from among the Acadians, while they are left to complete the cycle of a civilization untouched by any divine spirit, and then sink into decay. Isaac is taken and his brethren left aside. Jacob is chosen and Esau left. The Bible is as remorseless as science itself. For its purpose moral fitness is the test. The calling

of "Adam" seems therefore to be but the first of many such selections, the first of many of its kind.

The story does indeed sound far away and strange. Surely nothing could be more unsuitable upon which to build a system of formal dogma. But as a piece of profound ethnic wisdom it shows an insight marvellous enough. It rests morality upon those broad foundations where the *communis sensus* of the normal man looks for it. It presents (1) a personal God who can speak; (2) a human faculty which can apprehend; (3) a power of will which can choose; (4) that the essence of wrong-doing consists not in damage to the community, but in disobedience to the Eternal Law.

Therefore the Lord-God said, "Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil".

> "And so I live, you see,
> Go through the world, try, prove, reject,
> Prefer, still struggling to effect
> My warfare; happy that I can
> Be crossed and thwarted as a man,
> Not left, in God's contempt, apart,
> With ghastly, smooth life, dead at heart,
> Tame in earth's paddock as her prize".

Make what allowance one will for the obscurity of the story, the fact remains that the moral progress of the race has been but the completion of the picture there sketched in broad outline. The evolutionist comprehends it best; the systematic theologian least. We find ourselves following the sweep of a majestic movement, similar in kind to that from the

monad to the man. Here again, as at other points, the progress halted, helpless or at fault, and God vouchsafed the gift of a new impulse. Here it is nothing less than the inbreathing of his own spirit. It endows the recipient with that divine quality in virtue of which he is capable, under suitable conditions, of being "born again". It accounts for the complex and contradictory impulses which contend in the arena of the human soul. It accounts for the old man as well as the new. It recognizes the surviving ape and tiger which chatter and growl among the human affections. It brings man in sight of "the tree of life" and bids him long mightily for its fruits. It bids him work among thorns and briars, but when he lifts up his face he learns that he has "become as one of us". It gives him sanction for conduct and hope of endless progression. It accounts for the faults of the patriarch, the faith of the apostle, and the faultlessness of the Perfect Man.

IMMORAL SALVATION

"In an inscription from the Egyptian monuments, which dates back to the early days of Moses, there is reference to a then ancient legend of a rebellion of mankind against the gods; of an edict of destruction against the human race; and of a divine interposition for the rescue of the doomed people. In that legend a prominent place is given to human blood, which was mingled with the juice of mandrakes and offered as a drink to the gods, and afterward poured out to overflow and revivify the earth".—TRUMBULL, "Blood Covenant".

II

IMMORAL SALVATION

I WISH to emphasize still more strongly that the revolt of a large portion of the modern world from Christianity as it has been presented is due not to intellectual but to moral causes. It is true that the extension of knowledge has rendered impossible the acceptance of a multitude of fond beliefs, easy for former times. The six natural days of creation, the universality of the Deluge, the divine sanction of the Levitical system, and the like, have been rendered untenable simply by increasing knowledge. But no one is seriously disturbed thereby. It is so plain that there is no necessary connection between these things and Christ that they may disappear without hurt, so soon as misguided orthodoxy shall cease to see in them things which are not there. If farther increase of knowledge should re-establish them, well and good. The Intelligence can listen to arguments, and is always open to proofs. But the Conscience is another thing. Its judgments are final and it resents any attempt at argument.

Now, the common moral sense has reached a stage at which it turns away from that dogma which has long been exhibited as the very foundation of Chris-

tianity, and as the true and evident interpretation of the person and work of Christ,—the dogma of Vicarious Atonement. Around this theory has gathered so much of the doctrine and the emotion of religion that to challenge it must seem to many as a forbidden deed. Nevertheless it must be done, in the interest of truth and of Christianity itself.

The historical fact is that Jesus was put to death as a malefactor. The times were cruel, and it so happened that the mode of his death was by crucifixion. It took place on the common execution ground outside the city of Jerusalem. To a western visitor to the capital the sight had little noteworthy about it. He scarcely singled it out for notice from among the hundreds of crosses in every province upon which he had seen men writhing during his travels in the East. If he had made any special inquiry about this offender he was told that he had been a rather interesting, and probably quite harmless man, a dreaming Jew, who had promulgated vague notions about a new social and political order, and had gathered about him a considerable following. It was a pity that he had to be taken seriously, indeed the Governor had tried to save him from the consequences of his own indiscretion, but then, you know, the laws concerning sedition are very stringent, and none of these laws take much account of persons or motives, and so the poor man blundered to his fate. It is a pity. So the official world would have answered. The religious world explained that

this was a very pestilent and dangerous fellow. He was utterly without reverence, jested about our most hallowed and long established institutions, spoke scurrilous abuse of priests and dignitaries, held and taught loose and dangerous notions about God and religion, broke the holy sabbath day, told the rabble, for instance, that harlots and tax farmers were more worthy people than even magistrates and clerics. He was a dangerous demagogue, all the more dangerous because of his strangely attractive personality and the diabolic charm of his eloquence. Something had to be done with him. Even though no specific charge could well be brought against him, it was better that he should be put out of the way than that the whole people should be jeopardized. He was leading them inevitably to anarchy, atheism, and rebellion. He has simply come to the end that such men always reach.

The crowd that seethed around the spear points which ringed the bloody square, and mocked at the man upon the middle cross, explained that he was an exposed fraud and imposter, that he had deluded them with glittering promises about a new Kingdom he was to inaugurate, a kingdom in which there should have been no rich and no poor, where all should have share and share alike, a kingdom the least of whose citizens should sit on thrones judging the peoples, a kingdom in which all should be priests and kings, in which every sick and ailing one would have his ills cured by magic, where would be no op-

pression, toil, or poverty. All these things he promised, and now he has shown himself unable to save his own back from the scourge or his own body from the cross. We are delighted that he has been found out.

A few timid and terrified friends who knew him best looked on from a safe distance, broken-hearted. Here was the truest and noblest man they had ever known or imagined. He had steadfastly set his face toward righteousness, he had told the truth to priest and publican alike, he had led his friends near to God, his speech had been as the speech of an angel; he had been pure and sweet and lovable beyond telling; they had even hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel. But somehow he had managed to excite the hostility of all the powers, he had been injudicious and careless about offending, he had said things about himself which when misinterpreted had the color of blasphemy. Now all these hateful forces had closed about him and brought him to an ignominious and horrible death. And they looked him a despairing and final farewell.

A single mercenary of the legion, leaning indifferently with arms folded about the shaft of his spear, heard the broken sentences which fell from the dying man's bloody lips, marked his bearing, dignified even in his extremity, and muttered to himself that this time at any rate the law had miscarried, this man was surely innocent.

This is what the spectators saw,—and this is all

they saw,—a middle-aged man was being crucified. When he was dead they went their ways, having seen all there was to see.

But for many centuries myriads of Christian eyes have converged upon the same scene, and have discerned in it, or believe that they have seen in it, a thing which was not visible to the lookers. To their eyes the Cross has been transformed into an Altar; the Man has been transmuted to a Lamb; the crucified Galilean has become a Great High Priest; the soldier with stained spear has become an unsuspecting Levite; the gushing blood has become etherealized into smoke ascending to the gratified nostrils of an angry God; the turbid crowd have become, all unconscious, the beneficiaries of a Sacrifice offered under the dome of heaven for all the inhabitants of earth.

May the event in history be thus construed? Is this the true interpretation of that great tragedy? If not, what will explain the rise and vogue of the strange and ghastly fiction? We cannot disguise the situation. If this interpretation be not true to reality we must deny one of the most widely current and generally accepted notions about Christ and his place in the scheme of things. I say accepted rather than believed, for when the notion is plainly stated in terms with which the understanding can deal, its intrinsic incoherence and its ethical monstrosity must compel its rejection. Nevertheless, it remains as an idol of the imagination before which generations have

prostrated themselves, and whose grim hideousness is hid from the devotees by the smoke of their own incense. Of all the conceptions actually existent within Christendom this is probably the most widely diffused. Most Christians indeed would be likely to aver that underlying all their doctrinal and ecclesiastical disagreements they are at one in what they would call the fundamental belief that Christ was a Sacrifice offered to appease the anger of an outraged God, and that it has been so far efficacious that it has left God with no valid claim against any man who will take the proper steps to interpose this safeguard between God's judgments and himself.

> "O tree of glory, tree most fair,
> Ordained those holy limbs to bear,
> How bright in purple robe it stood,
> The purple of a Saviour's blood.
>
> "Upon its arms, like balance true,
> He weighed the price from sinners due,
> The price which none but he could pay,
> And spoiled the spoiler of his prey".

It is the burden of the Roman Mass and the Hallelujah lassie's exhortation, of the revivalist's hymns and the cultus of the Sacred Heart. It is the gloomy theme of mediæval art, hangs darkly about the stained glass of cathedral windows, is enshrined in a myriad pyxes, is what the wayfaring man takes to be the central article of the Christian creed.

The Greek Church says, "He has done and suf-

fered in our stead all that was necessary for the remission of our sins ".

The Roman Church says, " It was a sacrifice most acceptable unto God, offered by his Son on the altar of the cross, which entirely appeased the wrath and indignation of the Father ".

The Westminster Confession says, " The Lord Jesus by his perfect sacrifice of himself hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and hath purchased reconciliation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven for all whom his Father hath given him ".

The two conceptions upon which the dogma rests are, appeasement of an angry God by pain; and substitution of a victim in the room and stead of an offender. We must hold the dogma to its real and intended meaning. For a notable tendency is evident in contemporary orthodoxy to retain the terms of the doctrine while throwing overboard its contents. It has begun to be realized in many quarters that both its ethical conception of God and its moral estimate of man are unworthy. But the attempt is being made to save that sacrosanct thing called " sacrifice " by giving it an exalted and unnatural meaning. This must not be allowed. It has been held before the world for ages as the true interpretation and presentment of the essential meaning of Christ. If it be not true it ought to be cast out as an intruder within the holy place. Propitiation of God by sacrifice, and the transference of righteousness from the innocent to the guilty, are of the very essence of it. These

are both survivals from ancient paganism. To uproot them was the purpose of Judaism and Christianity. Judaism failed, and perished through being itself slowly transformed into idolatry. Christianity has been saved thus far from a like failure only because it has within it the living Christ. But the time must come, and ought not to be far distant, when his work among men will be represented in terms and images freed from the taint of an outgrown savagery.

Propitiatory sacrifice belongs at a stage of development through which all peoples pass. At that stage God and the devil for them are one. They suspect themselves to be in the presence of unseen powers which are able to help or hurt. Their gods are even such as they themselves are. If they are unwilling they can be bribed; if they are angry they can be appeased by presents. The African savage offers his demon a goat, the South Sea Islander placates his god with a plantain or a fish, the Phœnician mother burns her babe to appease Moloch, the Mexican priest tears the heart from a comely youth and holds it dripping toward the heavens. It is to avert the anger or to bribe the good offices of a god. At a later point the "scapegoat" idea enters. Every year at the Thurgelia the Athenians dragged a man and a maid to the brink of the Acropolis and hurled them to death that they might bear away a year's sins from the city of the Violet Crown. Romans threw their victims from the Tarpeian Rock to

the same end. In Babylon a young man was crucified at the summer solstice to bear away the sins of the people.

It has been a fond device of theology to interpret all these cruel customs as unconscious prophecies of the Great Sacrifice to be made at the right time for the sins of the whole world,—as but fragmentary shadows of the Cross flung backward along the dim pathway of human history. Especially has this sanction been claimed for the bloody rites of Israel. This claim is utterly without support. The whole weight of evolutionary science and ordered history is against it. These phenomena are coming to be more and more intelligible, and indeed to have a worth of their own, but this is because they are seen to be the natural and spontaneous expression of religion at a stage of evolution where men are otherwise ignorant and brutal. They bear the same relation to the religion of Christ as do the crude moral judgments of savage man to the morality of Jesus. But the attempt to interpret him in terms of primitive cult is to shut up the sun of righteousness in troglodytic caves.

Nor ought we to be any longer misled to believe that the institutes of Moses and the Levitical System bear any different relation to Christ. The Sacrificial System was no institute of Moses, either with or without divine sanction. What that great religious master did in the region of worship was the counterpart of what he effected in the sphere of law.

When, for example, he fixed the law of retaliation at "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", he was not establishing a code of vengeance. On the contrary, he was confining within the narrowest compass possible a custom of vengeance universally prevalent. It was an immeasurable gain over what went before to limit the thirst of revenge within the bounds of a rough-and-ready equity. The avenger must not hurt the victim *more* than he himself had been wronged. The whole Mosaic code was, moreover, wonderfully designated to eliminate those "wild justices" which at the time it could do no more than restrain. So with Sacrifice. It was an ethnic custom, universal, extravagant, cruel. The backward people whom Moses led knew no other mode in which to express their piety. What he did was to limit the custom within the narrowest bounds possible at the time and place. He did not pronounce it good, nor did he contemplate its perpetuity. His successors, the prophets, ceaselessly strove to give the every-day devotion of the people a higher and more reasonable direction. Their ideal was never the culmination and crowning of the custom in a victim whose value would be absolute and pain infinite. They looked for the custom, and the conception of God upon which it rested, to perish and be left behind.

They declare again and again that it was a worship distasteful to the Almighty. The history of Israel is as simple as it is melancholy. The Prophets and the Hierarchy strove together throughout its

course. Finally the voice of the prophet ceased and the priest remained in possession. Five centuries before Christ that System which was not of Moses, but elaborated in pagan Babylon, was set up in all its gorgeous barbarity, and from that time on the moral declension of the Hebrews was steady and inexorable. Religion was for them the placation of God by gifts; holiness was a ceremonial cleanliness with no moral quality. The prophet cried in vain his "thus saith the Lord, to what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? I am surfeited with the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he goats. Who hath required *this* at your hands when you come to tread my courts"? It was a religion of the shambles and the medicine-man, and broke itself to pieces against the Son of Man.

And yet within three centuries of his crucifixion we find this ancient idol enthroned upon the altar of the Christian Church. What will explain or account for this hideous changeling in the holy cradle? How comes it that the God of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ became identified with Moloch, and the Babe of Bethlehem with the child of a Philistine woman? That the cross was interpreted to the conscience in terms intelligible only to Levites and Shamans? It is alas, only too easy to account for it. But before entering upon the task to explain the presence of this misconception of Christ's work it would be well, if possible, to estimate the mischief it has wrought.

Probably most Christian ministers will agree that it is growing increasingly difficult for them to gain a hearing for their Gospel. They will agree also that those most difficult to win are the good men rather than the bad ones. The late Professor Bruce, whose orthodoxy none will question, has left on record these strange words, "I am disposed to think that a great and increasing portion of the moral worth of society lies outside the Christian Church, separated from it not by godlessness, but rather by exceptionally intense moral earnestness. Many, in fact, have left the Church in order to be Christians".

The reasons commonly assigned for this arrest in the progress of Christianity are no doubt real reasons. They are such as, the enormous increase in material progress and luxury; the bewildering advance in human knowledge; the restless commercial activity which marks the epoch; the domination of the physical sciences; the stubborn moral obtuseness of the masses, and such like. But over against these stand the facts that the intellectual activity and scepticism of the Western world of to-day is probably far less than that of the Greek world to which the Apostles preached; that the luxury and self-indulgence which encompass the Church to-day is not a circumstance compared with that of the Roman world of the Cæsars; that the moral darkness of society in our time is light itself by contrast with the world in which primitive Christianity won its triumphs.

But there is this difference: the religion which the Apostles preached was one whose moral ideas commanded the homage of all whose souls it touched. This remained true for centuries, even after the bleeding Christ became its symbol. Low and unworthy as was the plan of salvation offered to the Gauls and Franks, the Lombards and Northmen, it was still immeasurably above the ethical standards of their own religions. It is a commonplace of historical reflection that during late centuries missionary zeal has accomplished smaller triumphs than during the first centuries or in the Middle Ages. No people has been converted to Christianity for a thousand years. There are, no doubt, many explanations of this. But there is one which the Christian man cannot contemplate without pain. It is that the moral ideals of men have overtaken and passed above and beyond those contained in the popular presentations of Christianity. Endless labor has been expended to remove the intellectual obstacles in the way. Is it time to remind ourselves that the real difficulties are moral ones? Not unworthy Christians alone, but an unworthy Christ is the stumbling-block. It is the bald fact that the dogma of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, which has for so long been exhibited as the central truth of Christianity, is now rejected by a society whose moral sense has outgrown it. The whole scheme of which it forms the base is felt to be immoral as well as untrue.

The average man of to-day does not believe that

human nature is but the moral wreck and débris of an Edenic man. He refuses to believe that guilt is hereditary in any sense, though he knows well that sin is. He believes that the law against the attainder of blood is written in the constitution of the universe. He will not believe that a course of action which would be wrong for a man can be right for God. The human idea of justice demands that the penalty shall fall upon the person who offends and not upon some one in his stead, even though the sovereign furnish the victim and the substitute be ever so willing. At a certain stage of moral advancement Zaleucus, king of the Locrians, could be admired and revered. His law required that the adulterer should lose his eyes. When his own son was convicted of the offence, his father, to save the sanctity of the law and at the same time allow his love to act, commanded that one of his son's eyes and one of his own should be pulled out. The world of that day looked upon Zaleucus as a miracle of goodness; the world of to-day can see in him only a fond and foolish tyrant.

Religious thought no longer moves among governmental ideas and legal fictions. It has become biological. In the processes of the spirit the watchwords are not justification, but development; not salvation, but character; its antitheses are not acquittal and condemnation, but living and perishing. It is known that hereditary evil is a force which works within the life, and not a penal inheritance passed down

from an ancestor. It believes that righteousness is salvation, and that nothing else can be. It believes that righteousness in men is the wish of God, and that it always was his wish, and they do not believe that there is now or ever was in the nature or statutes of God any obstacle which had first to be overcome before men could be permitted to begin to be good, or in order that God might think their goodness good. To a world at this stage "vicarious" redemption cannot be preached. They will not accept it at any price. If they be still assured that this is really God's method, they will answer with John Stuart Mill, "I will call no being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-man; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go".

The well-meant attempts to find analogies to the doctrine in the experiences of life are rejected by the intelligence and the conscience alike. Every one knows that the good and innocent are always suffering for the faults of the bad. But every one knows also that this suffering does not lessen but increases the blame for the one who takes advantage from the pain. Every martyr of a holy cause sacrifices himself deliberately, but that does not render innocent the multitude who stone him. The mother starves herself that her children may eat; the engineer goes down to death with his hand on the reverse lever that the passengers may be saved; the merchant pays his friend's debts to save his friend's good name. But

none of these have anything in common with that interpretation of Christ's sufferings which we denounce. In none of these things is there anything like a transference of moral status or an "imputation" of righteousness. They are all, indeed, gathered up within that eternal cross-bearing which is the concomitant of loving. In the heart of their blessed company is indeed the eternal Soldier, Martyr, Mother-soul, who was crucified in God before the world was. But they have nothing in common with a victim bound upon an altar and immolated by a priest.

Could any two conceptions be more utterly contradictory than the classic sayings of Jesus, "If any man would be my disciple let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Not every man who sayeth unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven", and the classic hymn,

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood
From thy side, a healing flood,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from guilt and make me pure.

"Should my tears forever flow,
Should my zeal no languor know,
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save and thou alone;
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling"?

In popular speech the content of the dogma in question is expressed by the term "Redemption". The word means to buy off or to buy back. It is a commercial term. The captive held by Barbary pirates or Sicilian brigands is bought and set free. The Order of Redemptorists took its name from this. They were redeemers. In Teutonic custom the convicted felon could compound for a price, so much for a limb, so much for an eye, so much for a life. But in what do these resemble the action of Bishop Bienvenue which warranted him in saying to Jean Valjean, "You are mine; I have bought you"? or that on account of which the Apostle could say, "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price"? Christ's blood a ransom paid to the devil, as was for long maintained? A price to an angry God to allay his fury? The satisfaction of a bond held by an almighty Shylock? Each and every one of these contentions has been maintained by grave and respectable systemizers. Augustine, Anselm, Luther, Calvin. These are great names. They have laid their hands upon the souls of millions, dead and living. Sincerely believing that they were preaching Christ, they have propagated a gloomy paganism which has gone far to render the cross of Christ of none effect.

It avails not to be told that these gross conceptions are misrepresentations and caricatures of the doctrine of the Atonement as actually held and taught by intelligent and well-informed Christians. They are not caricatures; they are photographs.

Nor will it serve to say, with the late Archbishop Magee, that, "so far as they have any color of plausibility they rest upon the impassioned rhetoric of the pulpit and the hymn-book". Even if this were so it must be remembered that the pulpit and the hymn-book are the accredited vehicles upon which religious teaching is borne to the people. If their burden is a false one it will be rightly taken for the real one. No; what the Archbishop truly calls "this reversion to the worst ideas of pagan sacrifice, savoring of the heathen temple and reeking of blood", is woven into the very fabric of Confessions, Articles, and Liturgies. It is seriously defended by scientific theology and has the imprimatur of the organized Church.

We return now to the question of how to account for the existence and persistence of a presentation of Christ which the moral sense rejects. I have said that it is only too easy to account for, and so it is, so far as concerns the historic law which operates in such a case. As in commerce a debased currency always tends to drive a precious one out of circulation, so in philosophy and religion a low conception can hold the field long against a noble one. This is what has occurred in the Christian kingdom. But this brings us to the place where we should discover when, and where, and how, the spiritual currency of Christ became thus debased; when and how his coin came to be stamped on one side with a sacrificial bull, and on the other with a mitred priest.

To begin with, let us ask the plain question,—Did Jesus conceive of himself as a propitiatory sacrifice, or of his work as an expiation? The only answer possible is, Clearly he did not. With the exception of two phrases attributed to him, and which we will look at more carefully after a little, there is not the shadow of a suggestion that such an idea ever entered his mind. And there is everything in his life to show that the whole circle of ideas in which this conception is imbedded was abhorrent to him. It is true that the record of his teaching is fragmentary and incomplete, but there is quite enough in the Gospels to show what he believed himself to be, and to be doing. If the primal and controlling purpose of his existence had been to propitiate the wrath of God by means of a painful life and death, surely he would somewhere have said so. But it is the one thing which he does not say. He has much to say about himself and his mission. He calls himself a Light, to reveal God and illuminate the dark places of life. He is a Shepherd, leading a flock, guarding it against rapacious beasts, feeding it, seeking the mavericks, carrying the lambs in his bosom. He is a Physician, diagnosing the ills of men, precribing medicaments for their cure, laying balm upon their sores. He is a Tribune of the people, disturbing the world's dull and ignoble peace, setting a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against the mother. He is Bread, wholesome for the soul's food, and needful to sustain the soul's life. He is Water, to assuage

the soul's thirst and lave the heart's fever. He is Leaven, to stir the ferment in the world's sodden lump which shall save it from decay. He is Salt, to keep the world wholesome. He is the Vine, the Door, the Strong Man, the Bridegroom, the Judge. But he does not call himself the Victim or the Priest.

That he expected and intended to die, is plain enough. But he nowhere placed upon his suffering and death the interpretation which it afterward came to bear. In all his sayings which have been preserved, he gives the clear impression that he took his privation and pain and death as being "in the day's work", incidental and unavoidable necessities of the task which he had undertaken, but not as the task itself. They were the price which he had to pay for being what he was. But there is no intimation that he attributed to them any sacrificial or propitiatory value.

To the above statement there are just two exceptions. What we have to say about them may best be introduced by showing them in their context.

"Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right, and the other on thy left in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said unto her, Ye know not what ye ask. . . . The princes of the gentiles exercise dominion, and they that are great exercise authority. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him

be your servant; even as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to but to minister; *and to give his life a ransom for many*";

and

"And as they were eating Jesus took bread and blessed it and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, Take; eat; this is my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, *which is shed for many for the remission of sins*".

The significant phrases are those in italics, "to give his life a ransom", and "blood shed for the remission of sins". Now, let it be well kept in mind that these are the only sayings attributed to Jesus which give any color to the contention that he regarded himself in the light of a propitiatory sacrifice. And let it be further remembered that they are not only foreign to but directly opposed to the whole tenor of his teachings. But they are quite in keeping with a theory concerning Christ which grew up during the fifty years between his death and the time when the Gospels were written. Within that period arose the Gospel of the Infancy; the circumstantial but contradictory accounts of the Resurrection; the twisting of the events of his life to fit the requirements of Hebrew prophecy. All these later ideas were antedated in the written Gospels. In the phrases before us it would seem that we have an instance of the same thing done in the interest of theology. In each case the context shows plainly that the phrases are foreign to the matter in hand. Jesus'

argument is in each case complete without them. One cannot but feel that they do not belong there. The Gospels are conversations and traditions committed to writing fifty years after the event. If during that time a theory concerning the Master's life and work gained currency we may expect that it would show itself in shaping the written story. That such a theory did become elaborated during that period we shall see. It appears more reasonable, therefore, to believe that the two phrases "ransom" and "remission" are placed in Jesus' mouth by a later tradition than that they were used by him, and intended to present a conception of himself which is irreconcilable with his own plain words.

The Acts of the Apostles contain the only record we have of the terms in which the earliest ambassadors of Jesus presented his Gospel. The book gives a brief but coherent *résumé* of four speeches by St. Peter at Jerusalem and one at Cæserea; a conversation of St. Philip; a long speech of Stephen; the proceedings and discussions of a Council; and a dozen speeches of St. Paul, delivered at various places, and to all sorts and conditions of people. In it we have Christ interpreted by his earliest interpreters. Here, if anywhere, we ought to be able to discern what the men commissioned by himself to present him actually thought about him. Now the significant fact is that not until we meet the very latest speeches of St. Paul do we meet the intimation that his suffering and death had any sacrificial value.

It is true that phrases occur upon which that interpretation has been put, but it is equally plain that the interpretation is a shadow thrown backward from a later time. By the evangelic and catholic theologian their discourses must needs be pronounced lacking in the vital and essential element of the Gospel of Christ. It is to the wonderful man Paul that the world owes the first coherent rationale of Jesus' career. The group of immediate personal friends who survived the Master were neither in the mood, nor were they the type of men, to set down in reasoned form the experience which had transformed their lives. They were still under the spell of his compelling personality, and they were overwhelmed by the new-found hope of immortality brought to them by his appearance after his death. The hope made new men of them and they were confident it would do the same for all who should hear of it. They preached the "Gospel of the Resurrection". And so did Paul, more forcefully than they all. For a time he preached nothing else. But presently he began to reason upon what lay behind the new-born hope. He therefore found in the "Expiation" a ground cleared for the Resurrection. Little by little the emphasis is transferred from the Resurrection to the Crucifixion. Then more and more the Crucifixion is identified with the Hebrew and ethnic conception of Sacrifice. Finally the Resurrection falls into the background, and his thoughts take on a crimson hue. Three interpretations of Christ lie superimposed in his system, biological,

legal, sacrificial, but in the end the last comes to dominate.

It is not surprising that this interpretation gained currency. The early Christians, whether Roman, Greek, or Jew, came to the new religion with preconceptions and habits of thought already formed. It is not possible for any one anywhere to disentangle himself from old beliefs while he takes in new truth. The most he can do is to readjust such of his old convictions as lie in immediate contact with the new one. But underneath these there is the whole contents of his mind. The new truth sinks down among these, and is colored by them while it transforms them. When he attempts to utter new truth he can only do it in language and imagery which he already possesses. It requires long time for the new idea either to work over the old ideas to its uses, or to escape from them altogether by building up a new imagery about itself. The truth of Christ could not escape these inevitable conditions. He lived and died in Judea, under Roman law, and his life was construed by Roman Jews. In being transmitted through their minds it received a coloring which it still retains. The Great Surrender was pictured in Levitical terms. The Light of the world shone out through the stained window of the temple at Jerusalem. This refraction and discoloration must be allowed for by a world which would see the Sun in his glory. Paul, a Roman citizen as well as a Pharisee of the Pharisees, mingled his pigments in colors borne from Roman law

and Hebrew sacrifice. One could as well construct a zoölogy as a gospel in these terms. Christian thought has been bewildered and Christian instinct wellnigh defeated by this logically coherent but empty scheme. Christ's terms are biological; this one's are legal. And Christianity is essentially a life process and not a commercial transaction.

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS

"It is indeed a strange and significant thing: so much speculation about Christ, so little earnest inquiry into his actual mind; so much knowledge of what the creeds or confessions, the liturgies or psalmodies of the Church said; so little knowledge of the historical person or construction of the original documents. It is still more significant that the men most intent on the revival of religion through the revival of the Church were the very men who seemed least to conceive the need of the return to Christ. They were possessed to find and restore the Church of the Fathers, and to the Fathers they appealed; but there is no suggestion that Christ as the founder supplied the determinative idea of his own Church".—FAIRBAIRN.

III

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS

If, then, the interpretation of Jesus which we have just examined be dismissed as an offence at once to the intelligence and the conscience, what then is his real rôle in the drama of humanity? To this, I reply as follows:—Christianity takes its rise not from the life or the death of Jesus, but from his "resurrection". It was not until after that event that his personality assumed any world-wide significance. If that had not taken place, his life, assuming it to have been otherwise exactly as recorded, would not have been of significance. It would have been strange and that is all. He would no doubt have held place in human memory only as a greater Confucius or Socrates. It was the "man risen from the dead" who arrested the world's attention, and it noticed him solely on that account.

Let me say here that if any one chooses to take the position that the alleged occurrence is so inherently incredible and impossible that even to consider it is folly, I have nothing to say to him, except something like this:—We realize as fully as you do that it is contrary to all human experience, and that probably

no amount of evidence would establish it at the bar of science. But we realize also that human experience is not final. What you and we alike call the "order of Nature" is, after all, no more or less than God's routine way of doing things. It has no dynamic in itself. It can neither cause nor hinder. It is at least possible that in the experience of a race a critical point may be reached where something out of the common ought to happen. If so we may be sure it will happen. All that can be said against the event in question is that it stands alone and isolated among phenomena. What then? Cannot a fact be a fact until there be another like it? As to this fact we contend there is abundant reason for its being. There is also reason to believe that it does not stand alone.

The essential nature of the fact has been long obscured by a crowd of pious imaginations which have overlaid it. Let it be plainly stated that there is here no question of the resuscitation of a man who was dead. It is not a question of a body but of a spirit. The body which hung upon the cross was laid in the tomb, and no doubt stayed there. The late stories in the Gospels of the empty tomb, the earthquake, the great stone, the angelic appearances, and so on, are so contradictory as to be irreconcilable. They were not written, in any case, until fifty years after the occurrence, after every contemporary was dead. Like the prodigies of the Infancy, they appear to be the product of a naïve piety which thought

to make the birth, life, death, and resurrection of their dear Lord more credible by gathering about them the marvels which were to that age the kind of evidence which told most. For our time such "evidence" is only an embarrassment. And there is no need for it. To prove that Jesus appeared to sundry persons after his death it is of no consequence whether his tomb was empty or filled. The affair does not concern the body, but that, whatever it is, which survives the body. No police examination of a grave can affect the case. It is reported that the late Professor James promised that he would, if possible, show himself after his death to certain of his friends. Suppose his promise to have been fulfilled, is it conceivable that they would have thought of testing the reality of his appearance by an inspection of his grave? They would not look for a body. All that they would demand would be to be able to identify the thing which should appear with their friend who had died.

What it was that St. Paul saw on the Damascus road, that Mary Magdalene saw in the garden, that the two disciples saw on the road to Emmaus, that sundry friends of the dead Jesus saw at different times, who can say? The grosser accretions to their story which have crept later into the Gospels, only becloud the reality. The heart of the matter is that they saw *something* which transformed their despair into confidence, their grief into rejoicing, and through them brought into humanity a conception

of human life which has transformed the world. This something is the Resurrection.

The point in Jesus' career at which he comes into relation with all human life is after he had died and was alive again. Even his disciples who had known him most intimately were obliged to make his acquaintance anew. He whom we seek to know is not the historical personage localized in a Roman province in the time of any Cæsar, but the transcendental personage, of infinitely "wide discourse, looking before and after". The cry "back to Jesus" which has arisen sporadically at so many places in Christendom of late years, voices a real and justifiable longing. It expresses the impatient feeling that Christ has in some way been lost in Christianity; that he has been overlaid and hidden within theological definitions, thrust out of sight behind ecclesiastical organizations, silenced amid the strife of tongues. It is certainly true that something has interposed between Christ and the great world. A religion that he meant to be so plain that the wayfaring man might not err therein, has come to be regarded as complex, abstruse, obscure.

But while this longing is intelligible and praiseworthy, one is bound to acknowledge that it is missing its aim. The fact is, the pilgrims have gone back in search of the wrong Christ. During the last half century a wealth of learning, labor, and even genius have been expended in the attempt to reproduce the historic personage and make him real. The

Holy Land has been explored, studied, photographed, in its minutest detail. The naïve story in the Gospels has been drawn out into "Lives of Christ" by the score. His antecedents have been traced in Jewish heredity. His dress, food, manners, speech, surroundings, have been reconstructed with infinite devotion, and no doubt, with substantial accuracy. More information concerning the setting of his life is taught every day in mission Sunday schools than Athanasius or Paul possessed. But when all is done the earnest man is not much less bewildered and hopeless among these antiquaries than was his ancestors among fine-spun theologies. They cannot see the forest for the trees.

The life of the man Jesus does become of absorbing interest, but only in its proper order and for its proper purpose. Not until the "risen" Christ engaged the world's attention did it even try to remember, much less to record the story, of his life. Then the devotion of a too creative memory recorded too much. But the belief in it has, in sober verity, wrought the most momentous result in human history. It transformed man's estimate of himself and of God. The fact was the essential content of the Apostle's evangel. Their message was not atonement, or redemption, or heaven or hell, but the announcement that a good man had been identified by them alive, after they had seen him dead and buried, and that he had assured them that the same possibility was open to any man who would seek it in the right way.

Those who could comprehend the "good news" welcomed it with the same kind of awed enthusiasm as would one to-day who should be offered a means of adding fifty, a hundred, a thousand years to his natural life. Their argument was that Jesus had made an experiment in human living, and had demonstrated in his own person that death need not defeat life, and that he had become a kind of first-fruits of an immortal harvest which might be abundant if men so chose. It is no doubt quite impossible for us to whom this is no longer news to understand with what eagerness this message was hailed, or how overwhelmingly it took possession of the minds and imaginations of men who before had no expectation of future life of any kind. Indeed the fear of death and hopelessness in its presence is a characteristic of the ancient world. Lucretius and Cicero in vain wrote labored treatises to reason its terrors away. The epitaphs on a thousand tombs register the flippant melancholy or the profound hopelessness of their grief for their dead.

The original appeal of the Gospel was to the supreme aspiration of all living beings, the "lust of living". It is little wonder that the first title applied to Christ was the "Lord and Giver of Life". And it is as little wonder that the appeal was so immeasurably more successful than the sordid one to the fear of damnation which has been made for now these so many centuries!

But having come so far we must now face the ques-

tion:—What and who was and is the Christ whom we believe to be superhuman? The first converts apparently made little or no effort to estimate his nature. They were content to take the Gospel as it was proffered. They believed that if they lived according to the "Way" announced they would, like him, survive their own deaths. The common notion now current that men are naturally immortal in any case was unknown to them. They were convinced that by his "way" only could they outlast death, and that by any other way they would perish out of being. The steadfastness of the early Christians in the face of obloquy, persecution, and torture has long been a gratuitous puzzle to historians. Of all the ingenious explanations, marshalled by Gibbon and his like, for the marvellous spread of Christianity in the first two centuries, this sufficient one is about the only one omitted. One may believe that they were mistaken in their conviction—but wherever one did hold it it rendered him proof against all assault. For what signified a few days' hunger, or a few hours on the cross, or a few moments in the fangs of the lions, so long as endurance meant endless existence, and surrender meant falling back into a few years longer of life, at best, with annihilation at the end of it? Life is not at any time so well worth the living, that one could easily be frightened back into it when he had the chance to exchange it for one which he believed to be far better, and which could not well be worse.

The scanty allusions to the movement in secular

history make it plain that the outside world looked upon it as a pitiful delusion. Alternately they admired the Christians' fortitude, and were incensed at their stubbornness. Meanwhile the belief spread, and all weapons against it were impotent. But it was not until from forty to sixty years after Jesus' disappearance that any rationale of this new life for men was attempted. Then, first of all, St. Paul undertakes the task. He explains however in terms which are most difficult to construe. Never was a more exasperating expounder than he. He passes from scientific precision to vivid metaphor, and thence to emotional rhapsody, and round again through the same circle, so that one is hard put to it to follow. His favorite formulæ are something like these:—the Christian " is in Christ ", or Christ " is in him "; or both are " bound up together in his dying and rising again "; or " his life is hid with Christ in God "; and such like. Strictly speaking, it is not a rationale of the phenomena at all, but endless ways of saying that Christ, by his steadfast persistence in his " way ", attained to the resurrection of the dead, and that any other through the same " way " may attain the same goal.

It is quite plain, however, that the matter could not remain in that shape. Human nature always craves the reason of things. The Church was now numerous and widespread, but it was almost entirely of people who knew Jesus only at second hand. The spell of his immediate presence had lifted. Who, and

what, is this person into whose hands we have committed our existence? It is patent that the Gospels were written in answer to this demand. To see the Christ of the Gospels it is not needful to inquire minutely into their date or authorship, or about their accuracy in details. These are questions for scholarship, and are in their place important. But the main thing has been settled long ago. Every one admits that they are memorabilia, collected generally from his contemporaries and sympathetic friends. If their portrait of him does not show up his features in its bold outlines we might better lay it aside. We may also, if we choose, disregard for the present the stories of the Infancy. All his followers made his acquaintance at first as a grown man. Their opinion of him was formed before they thought to inquire concerning his birth and parentage.

In the Synoptic Gospels we have the story as it was told at the demand of a people who already accepted and lived by the fact of the Resurrection. Without that belief it would not have been written, and without that belief brought to it it would have been incredible and unintelligible. All four Gospels really begin the story at the same point. They date its commencement from the time of a religious awakening which had place in Palestine in the fifteenth year of the Emperor Tiberius, while Pontius Pilate was Procurator of Judea, Annas and Caiaphas being High Priests at Jerusalem. The stage was held at first by the stern and picturesque prophet, John

the "Baptizer". Then a Jewish carpenter steps to the centre, and John makes his exit. The biographers thereafter confine themselves to his movements. This is the original story, and in Mark, the oldest, it stands thus. But in each of the other Gospels to the drama is prefixed a different prologue. By Matthew the genealogy of the central character, from Abraham down, is hung up against the scenes, together with an account of his parentage and birth. By Luke a different genealogy is posted, along with a different story of the Infancy. John prefixes a divine Prologue, after the manner of the Greek tragedies.

When we study it the problem may be stated thus: —What did Jesus conceive himself to be? What did he conceive himself to be doing? What did his biographers believe him to be? Let us take this last inquiry first. It is plain that before they wrote the first word they held him to be a man in some way apart from common humanity. In this opinion those for whom they wrote shared. But just what they did hold him to be is not plain. The strong impression given is that they did not know. That dogmatic certitude, that assumption that everything can be exhaustively stated, is absent from the first three Gospels, and is only present in the Fourth, which is not a biography, but a theological treatise. A certain tender hesitation, a reverent doubtfulness, if one may say so, marks the attitude of the disciples. That feeling is itself, perhaps, the best indication of what

they thought about him. Two things manifestly impressed them chiefly—the marvellous spiritual illumination of his words, and the marvellous power he exhibited in dealing with certain natural forces. The first of these is but illy defined as " sinlessness ". Faultlessness is but a tame and negative quality, and they make but little of it. They represent him as not only impeccably good, but dynamically good. The wisdom which they remembered in him was not at all the wisdom of the sage or the philosopher, but that deeper wisdom to which the heart responds. To this end they preserve his fugitive sayings, his more formal sermons, his parables, his apothegms, his profound and tender talks with his intimates, his answers to inquirers, his retorts to challengers.

They recount his healing sick persons, restoring sight to the blind, strengthening the impotent, cleansing lepers, and, in one instance, bringing the dead to life. The surprising thing is that they were not surprised. They make no vaunt of these marvels, or of him for their sakes. They are frank, on the contrary, to record that he thought of these powers but slightly, never used them to his own advantage, used them at all reluctantly, and always held them subordinate to his main purpose. Nothing could be presented more unlike the vulgar wonder-worker, an Abognotus or a Cagliostro. To them he was plainly not a wonder-worker, but a person from whom on other accounts one might expect marvels. The miracles and mighty works do not interrupt the narrative, nor

encumber it. They are of the substance of it and render it coherent. To the biographers he was at least superhuman. But when they were challenged, as they were more than once, to speak out what they thought of him, they hesitated. Either they were not certain, or they had no terms in which to express it. Most of them were content to say that he was a " prophet ".

Now, the prophet was a character with whose idea they were at home. He was one who, in addition to his qualities as a man, possessed certain other endowments in virtue of which he was able, within limits, to produce phenomena impossible to other men. For a while this formula seemed to be sufficient for the case; but before long it was seen to be so manifestly inadequate that it was abandoned. A few thought of him as " that Prophet ", i.e., the legendary seer and wonder-worker of tradition and religious folk-lore. But this notion gained little acceptance. It fitted him so illy that it could not cling. There was, indeed, extant a character which would describe him, but for a long time they hesitated to use it. It was that of the Jewish " Messiah ". This was the title of a personage held by the Jews in supremest reverence, but whose nature and qualities were most vague and confused. It is not possible to this day to find out with certainty what the Jew means or meant by the Messiah. Rabbi gainsays Rabbi, and historian disagrees with historian. One thing can be said, however, about every presentation of the char-

acter. He was to be a person higher than man, and lower than God. He possessed some of the attributes of both and not all of either, and had immediate relations with both. It is not surprising that this title was fixed upon Jesus, or that it is the name by which, in its Greek form, the Christ, he is known to this day. It satisfied better than any other term could the immediate craving for a definition. For that purpose it is indeed inadequate, but it was the best and truest available. Nor is damage wrought by its use save when ill-informed piety attempts to shrink the Son of God within the compass of an old Jewish conception. This is the highest point reached by the three first Gospels in their interpretation of Jesus. He was a "prophet"; or he was "Elijah"; or he was the "Messiah"; and beyond this they do not go.

We now ask, What did Jesus think himself to be? and to be doing? No one reading the Gospels can miss seeing that he regarded himself as one who had a definite and distinct purpose to accomplish. There is no feeling about or waiting upon circumstances. Whatever his task was, it is evident that he believed that if he did not accomplish it it would never be done.

There are two paths generally open to the great and sympathetic soul touched by the world's wrongs. One is to teach righteousness, the other is to organize righteousness; to be either a preacher or a reformer. Jesus chose neither. He added little or

nothing to the world's stock of theoretical morality. Probably all his noblest sayings may be matched from Socrates or Moses, from Seneca or Gautama. The great company of preachers has served the world well, but Jesus is not among them. No more did he conceive his task to be to reform society. God knows, the social, political, and economic order among which he lived was rotten enough. It was a drunken, lustful, cruel, and unjust world. The field for a reformer was ripe to the harvest. There were laborers ready, —not many, but very willing. A crusade might have been organized against the palpable wrongs, evils, and oppressions of life. Had he put himself at the head of it, with his unparalleled powers, inspired it with his indomitable courage, inflamed it with his divine enthusiasm, one might suppose it would have swept east and west from Galilee and cleansed the world. Indeed the thought did come to him, and tempted him mightily. All the kingdoms of the earth lay open to him, but he deliberately turned away from that path. If, then, his *metier* was neither to teach men goodness nor to change their environment, what was it?

Two words dominate all his speech,—" life " and " death ". With these two phenomena, which are really one, he concerned himself entirely. His problem was, What can be done with the individual existence? Can it be happily extended beyond the term which we call " natural "? If so, how? The eternal absurdity is that men die. The higher the individual rises in the scale of being the more he revolts from

the necessity. It puzzles his understanding; it stultifies his consciousness. What he really shrinks from is not the act of dying nor the fear of anything beyond, but the instinctive horror of being dead,—

> "That sense of ruin which is worse than pain,
> That masterful negation and collapse
> Of all that makes me man; as though I bent
> Over the dizzy brink
> Of some sheer, infinite descent,
> Or worse, as though
> Down, down, forever I was falling through
> The solid framework of created things,
> And needs must sink
> Into the vast abyss".

This inescapable horror is the unique experience of man. He can disguise it, accept it, jest at it, ignore it, damn it, according to his mood, but it is, after all, the determining force in his action. It increases just in proportion as his nature climbs and expands. The brute knows it not. The brute-like man is touched by it little if at all. But in measure as the individual consciousness deepens and expands and entangles itself with ever extending relationships, it is the more oppressed by this brutal surd.

To this primal instinct of being Jesus addresses himself. Whatever he accomplished he effected here. His problem and his task were biological. But he takes it up at the point where the human biologist lays it down. Is the individual life composed of such stuff, or does it contain within it such qualities,

or can it be moulded to such potencies that it can win through the barrier called Death? This is the question he asked; and the answer is Christianity; and nothing else is.

At this point a strenuous and sustained effort is necessary to empty our thought of some persistent misconceptions. It is indeed most difficult for us at this day to attach the same meaning which he did to the words which he used. In religious phraseology the antithesis "living and dying", "surviving and perishing", "salvation and destruction", have been for so long time used in secondary and metaphorical senses that it is hard to realize that in his mouth they had their plain and literal significance. His theme was not the happiness of two contrasted kinds of future existence, but existence itself. Can a man in any wise overcome death, and if so, how? Of course such an inquiry must lead at times to a point where the quality of the new existence comes into consideration, but this never engages his attention long, and is always subordinate to the main theme.

He pronounces at the outset that the thing is possible, but difficult. He introduces it under the category of a "Kingdom". But the moment that word is pronounced we have to be on our guard lest we miss its meaning. He uses the term in its biological and not its political sense. In other connections we are familiar with that use. We speak of the mineral Kingdom, the animal Kingdom, the vegetable Kingdom. In no other sense does he use the word for

the new Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a biological classification. Had naturalists and men of science formulated Christian theology, instead of metaphysicians and jurists, the world would have been spared an incalculable confusion. For it is the naturalist's legitimate field. But ages ago the truth of Christ was interpreted in terms of law instead of biology. The result has been that the very words of the Master have had fixed upon them an unnatural meaning from which it will be long before they recover. His language, however, is more intelligible than it has been at any time in the past. In the great cycle of human thought the physical sciences have brought into common use the mental forms into which his words fit.

"Except ye be born again ye cannot enter into the Kingdom". This is the heart of Jesus' message. But this "being reborn" is, to his view, not a metaphor but a scientific statement. Birth is a strange thing; it is an epoch in the progress of an individual life. It is not the commencement of it. The subject of it has reached the end of a stage of development before he can be born. The higher in the scale of being, the longer and more complete is this preliminary stage. Birth is only the entrance upon a new phase of being. Jesus does not present the new birth as the beginning of the soul, but as a radical change in its relationships. It cannot be born again until it has been born once. Nor does either the first or the second birth guarantee the

continuance in life of the thing born; it only gives it opportunity. His dictum is that there is a Way whereby the natural life of an individual creature can be so modified as to become endowed with immortal quality. The new creatures thus produced—their origin, their laws, their phenomena, their fortunes, he includes in a new Kingdom. He points out that, as might be expected, the entrance into this new kingdom differs in essential features from that into the kingdom next below. It is difficult to achieve, cannot be achieved at all without strenuous effort. In this Kingdom the pangs of parturition are borne by the child for himself. The gate is strait and the path narrow that leadeth into life, and relatively few find it. He asserts that the purpose of his presence has to do with this process,—that men might have life, life more abounding and persistent than they now possess.

It is a threadbare dictum of the great Synthetic Philosopher that life is conditioned upon adaptation to environment. Eternal life is conditioned upon the discovery of the environing God. This is the open secret of Jesus. The individual is mortal; but he may reach to immortality for himself, and presumably for his offspring, if he follow the law for that case made and provided. This process he calls the Way of Life. To exhibit the truth of all this would be to quote substantially the larger part of the New Testament. It all revolves about the new life of the individual man. It widens out into the

thought of a society composed of such twice-born souls. It contemplates the action and interaction between such a society and the natural world. It anticipates the ultimate dominion of such a type of man. It is the *Novum Organon* for the Human Race. All his sayings, arguments, metaphors, parables, aphorisms, are dominated by this controlling principle. His imagery is drawn almost exclusively from the processes and phenomena of life. "God so loved the world that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have æonian life". "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the spirit is spirit". "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven". "He that hearkeneth unto me and hath confidence in him that sent me hath æonian life in himself, and moves not to destruction, but hath passed from death into living".

The world was never so ready to comprehend Christ as it is to-day. One might say reverently that Jesus was the first Evolutionist. The question before us is not a "theological" one at all. It is the matter of the origin and phenomena of the highest life extant. It differs from the naturalist's ordinary problem in that the study of this form leads the student toward the future and not back toward the past. It is the stage of evolutionary progress at which the highest extant being now is. From the primordial slime life is built upward, each form being the scaffolding to support a farther advance, until

is reached the final product which we call Man. Evolution at every stage requires fit material upon which to work. Jesus finds the material for the New Man in the nature of the one which now is. His estimate of the quality of human nature is shown by the use to which he puts it. He conceives of it, not as "fallen", but as undeveloped. He called himself the Son of Man because he wished no mistake to be made in the matter. If his Way should prove successful for himself and reach its goal, it would be made plain that the path would be open to any man who would follow him. Later on we will have to face the question as to how the individual being of this new Order is produced. But before doing so we must look farther at the personality whom St. Paul calls "the Second Man, the Lord from Heaven".

THE PRIMITIVE CHRIST

"Conjecture of the worker by the work;
Is there strength there? Enough; Intelligence?
Ample; but goodness in a like degree?
Not to the human eye in the present state,
An isoscele deficient in the base.
What lacks then of perfection fit for God
But just the instance which this tale supplies
Of love without a limit? So is strength,
So is intelligence; let love be so,
Unlimited in its self-sacrifice,
Then is the tale true, and God shows complete.
Beyond the tale I reach into the dark,
Feel what I cannot see, and still faith stands".

BROWNING, "The Ring and the Book".

IV

THE PRIMITIVE CHRIST

THERE is something strangely repellent in the conventional formularies which express the Christian doctrine of the Divinity of Christ. The so-called Athanasian Creed may well be taken for an example. It is true that it has never been officially accepted by the Church, but it may be said that it is the habit of orthodoxy to esteem it the most complete statement of the doctrine extant. If the Christian multitude balk at it it is on account of the hardness of their hearts.

"For the right faith is that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man;
God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before all worlds; and Man, of the substance of his Mother, born in the world;
Perfect God, and perfect Man; of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting; equal to his Father as touching his Godhead;
And inferior to his Father as touching his Manhood.
Who, although he be God and Man, yet he is not two but one Christ;
One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by taking the Manhood into God;
One altogether; not by confusion of substance; but by unity of person;
For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ," &c., &c.

The secret of this repulsion is not hard to discover. It is not because the propositions are not true. They may be true enough, if they have any meaning. But lying behind them one feels a temper from which he will turn away if he can. If he has just been reading the Gospels, and comes from under their gracious spell to confront this simulacrum, he feels as one would to find himself unexpectedly in a room where a company of surgeons were dissecting the body of his brother. It deals with a dead Christ. The spirit which finds satisfaction in such work is akin to that which would "peep and botanize upon a mother's grave". It is as though the lover should make an inventory of his mistress' charms, as though one inscribed a Bertillon description for an epitaph on a brother's grave. It offends by its sheer cold-bloodedness. Nor is that all. One's intelligence shares in the offence to his reverence. For the terms of the formulary are really not presentable to the understanding. The mind which attempts to grasp them is eluded and irritated. One moment it sees and the next moment it does not see. Opposed and incompatible concepts are presented alternately and simultaneously, until thought, beaten back and forth like a shuttlecock, drops exhausted. The soul is offered an analysis when it wants a synthesis, a metaphysical formula when it wants a living Person. The Christological literature of the Church is of vast extent, and ranges from the most exalted speculation to the veriest trifling. But one rises from its study with a sense

of depression. He has been seeking the living among the dead; he is not there.

The purpose of this writing is something altogether different. I would, if possible, take the reasonable man by the hand, and lead him into the Presence. If he find there mystery, and reality passing understanding, it is only needful for him to recognize in it the same kind of mystery which he must always confront when he explores the arcana of Nature, or strives to know God. Men have no quarrel with mystery as such. The naturalist and the psychologist, as well as the man of affairs and the woman who loves, have learned long ago that every advancing step of knowledge or experience brings them into the presence of ever-widening mystery. But what they demand is to know that the mysterious things are real things, and not figments.

We have seen that one moiety of Jesus' work was to exhibit the capacity of the nature of man. To this end he was born, passed through the whole orbit of movement of a man, from the womb, through growth, through temptation, through death, through hell, into the new humanity. The other half of his task was to exhibit God. But according to him, the two processes coalesced and became one. Whoever sees man in his completeness finds in him something divine; whoever sees God finds in him something humane. This *rapprochement* of God and man is the note of Christianity. Unless we assume that human nature and divine nature possess a quality in com-

mon, it is useless to enter the field of religion at all. For only beings of the same kind can hold intercourse. A man can have no commerce with a stone; a fish cannot speak with a bird; only a god can hold converse with God. The Gospels assume this with a strange simplicity. The genealogy in Luke places Adam in the direct line of descent between God and Jesus; "Jesus, which was the son of . . . David, which was the son of . . . Abraham, which was the son of . . . Noah, which was the son of . . . Adam, which was the son of God". The *stirps* is the same throughout.

Christ regards men, not as manikins created by divine fiat, but as the fruit of God's loins. The Father's love for them is inescapable by himself. His own contentment and completeness are bound up with them. There is current a strange reluctance to think or speak of God as enduring pain. He is thought to be fitly conceived only as serene, impassable, unperturbed in his self-centred felicity. But the God of Jesus is one who has borne the cross in his heart since before the world was. Pain is the eternal concomitant of loving. Whosoever loves places himself within the power of the object of his love. His happiness is no longer in his own keeping. If the loved one suffer, he suffers; if the love be unrequited it becomes his torment. Its purest possible form is that of a parent for a child. The higher the nature of the parent, the more inextinguishable the love. If the parent be absolutely good, as God, the love

will be deathless. No waywardness of the child, no deformity, no folly, no crime can beat it off. The suggestion that the Parent would slay the child in order to regain his own peace or to safeguard his own justice, is one so wildly irrational that one can only stand amazed when he confronts it in theological guise. Suppose the All-Father, by one sentence of doom, to condemn and execute all his rebellious children, what then? Has God no memory? Is the blessed power to forget one of his attributes? And is love not made of the same stuff in all spheres of being? The eternal Father may not execute his children, nor can he un-get them. There remains therefore only to win their affection and bring them home. But love has no power to compel. It can only open its arms, entreat, solicit, and wait.

Jesus defines himself as at once the Son of Man and the Son of God. That is, the Ideal Man recognizes both his parents, He opens his arms to both. How did he conceive himself to be related to his Father? In the first place, he boldly claimed the family likeness. "He that seeth me seeth him that sent me". "He that seeth me seeth the Father". He claimed to have a direct and immediate commission to do certain things. "I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always the things which please him. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father". Many a man has been "conscious

of a mission" in the world, but no enthusiast uses language like this. It is but the simple truth that his speech does not give in any way the impression of an enthusiast. There is a certain serene sanity about him which is not easy to define, but which is irresistible.

Now, if it be true that he held a special commission from God to do a specific thing, when did he receive it, and where, and how? He himself does not say. He contents himself with asserting the fact. He says that he "came down from heaven"; that he is "doing the work which his Father gave him to finish"; that he "seeks not his own will, but the will of him that sent him". He claims to have a delegated power on earth to forgive sins. Once in a cryptic utterance he seems to assert for himself a pre-existence, "before Abraham was I am". This is as far as we can go, depending upon his authentic statements concerning himself. He believed himself to have a peculiar commission from God; he knew his Father's will beyond the possibility of mistake; he came out from the Father; he expected to return to the Father; and he *acted* as no mere man has either the power or the right to act.

We may acknowledge that this seems a meagre way for a divine personality to show himself withal. "If thou be the Christ, why not tell us plainly"? It would seem to have been so easy for him to exhibit himself in some less questionable shape. But this objection cannot stand against a very little sober

reflection. Why does not God always show himself? Why does he leave men to grope, and hesitate, and speculate, lost in the mazes of the universe? The answer is plain. Revelation is but the obverse of discovery. No truth is ever revealed to an intelligence except as it is discovered. The function of any reality is only to *be;* it is the task of intelligence to *see* it. In the nature of things God, at any time or place, can only be found of them that seek.

"Oh! where is the sea," the fishes cried,
As they swam the crystal clearness through;
"We've heard of old of the ocean's tide,
And we long to look on the waters blue.
The wise ones speak of an infinite sea;
O who can tell us if such there be?"

The lark flew up in the morning bright,
And sung and balanced on sunny wings;
And this was its song; "I see the light;
I look on a world of beautiful things.
But flying and singing everywhere,
In vain have I searched to find the air".

The task of the disciples was to see divinity, being in its presence. Did they see? And what did they see? The most exalted term used by any of them during Jesus' lifetime was, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". This definition, if it be a definition, he expressly approved. Now, what did they mean by it? I do not ask what the words connote when *we* use them, but what did Peter at Cæserea mean by them? The reply is, He did not

know clearly what he meant. It is the language of emotion, reverence, adoration. In that mood the mind does not attempt to define. The term used served well enough to express a feeling. And after all, the fact that Christ was able to arouse that feeling is a better proof of his divine quality than it would be to extract from his followers the most scientific definition.

The terms used, " Christ ", and " the Son of God ", were common in Jewish speech. But they were not used with any scientific precision. They were simply titles for an exalted personage. In a way, " Messiah " was to Jews very much the same thing that " Christ " is to the unthinking multitude among Christians, a high and divine personage, somewhere between God and man.

At that stage the Christian conception of Jesus stood for thirty years after his disappearance. His first ambassadors had no defined Christology. They were immediately concerned with his resurrection and its practical consequences. As to the Person who had risen, they presented him under a variety of terms, with the idea that he was a divinely exalted person, but they did not identify him with God. Six weeks after the resurrection, Peter, as the delegate of the apostolic band, for the first time preached Christ to the crowd. He introduces him as " a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders which God did by him "; as " the Holy One "; as " the Messiah ". A little later, in his next address, he calls

him "the Righteous One"; the "Prince of Life"; the "Servant Jesus whom God anointed"; a "Prince and Saviour". Stephen used words of like import. Paul in his speech at Athens, spoke only of "Jesus and the Resurrection". It is noteworthy also that in the same address, when he was arguing with the Greeks about the real God as contrasted with their idols, he makes no mention of Christ at all. At this point they stood for many years. The fact was, they felt no need for any more precise definition of the Christ. He possessed their worship wholly, and they were under a driving enthusiasm. Moreover, Christianity was at the first deemed both by its friends and enemies to be a movement within Judaism. The Christians were still Jews, and they had no thought of becoming anything else. Their aim was "to redeem Israel". They did not realize at all that Christ's relations were with the universal world. For the purpose in hand, the terms in which they presented him were quite sufficient.

But when Christianity was driven to see that Judaism was too narrow for it, and was led to confront the pagan world, the necessity for some more coherent and portable conception of Christ became evident. So long as they preached the "Messiah" to Jews they did not need to define the term; but when they undertook to preach Christ to pagans, the first question which they must hear and answer was, "What is this Christ"? At this point we meet St. Paul. We may say that we owe to him the Christ of Christen-

dom. His first step was to disentangle Christ from the Jewish Messiah. That conception, as we have seen, was both too narrow and too incoherent to fit it. He makes little of the actual life of Jesus, in fact seldom refers to it at all. Indeed it may well be doubted whether he was familiar with anything more than its chief incidents. Of all writers who have influenced the world's thought and life, Paul is perhaps the most difficult to construe. He mingles dialectics, poetry, exhortation, and rhapsody, as only untrained genius could do. He nowhere sets out in formal propositions his conception of Christ. But it is not difficult to gather from his undisputed Epistles his main idea. He refers not at all to the teachings or acts of Jesus. The only saying of his which he quotes at all is one which is not recorded in any of the Gospels. He concerns himself exclusively with the resurrection, and with the death, which he regards as practically a part of the same event. The Christ of Paul is a being of a quite different kind from the Jesus of the Gospels. It is a transcendent being whose orbit only intersects that of the historic personage at the point of his death. He depicts Christ as "the image and likeness of God"; as one in whom is reflected "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God"; the "Man from Heaven"; the "Life-giving Spirit"; the "one without sin"; the "One sent from God"; but he always stops short of identifying him with God himself. Indeed in one crucial passage he shows that he conceives him to be

still, in the scale of being, separate from and subordinate to God:—"I would have you to know that as the head of the woman is the man; the head of every man is Christ; and the head of Christ is God". In substance, he took the Hebrew-Christian "Messiah", broke it up, set free the Christ which they had concluded in it, and set him in the place of supreme honor, over all things in the universe, but beneath God.

Thus far we have taken account only of those religious ideas and things which had place within the narrow circle of Judaism. But that complex thing which we call Christianity has drawn and woven into its fabric material from very many and very different sources. "The world", says Dill, "was in the throes of a religious revolution, and eagerly in quest of some fresh vision of the Divine, from whatever quarter it might come". From the Stoics had already spread the brotherhood and equality of men, an active pity for the miserable and succor for the helpless, the notion of moral equality of the sexes, and a gentler consideration for the slave. From the religions of Egypt and the East had come the idea of sacramental grace, and crude adumbrations of immortality. The cults of Mithra, Isis, and the Great Mother had made familiar the ideas of baptismal regeneration, the blood bath for the mystical washing away of sins, the mystic meal of bread and consecrated wine, the recovery of the Great Mother from the dead at the time of the spring

equinox, and the great Festival of the sacred year on the 25th of December. Pagan theology had already elaborated a celestial hierarchy, in which the Deity, while in essence remote and inaccessible, was linked to humanity by a graduated scale of inferior spiritual beings, the equivalent of angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, and powers. Philo and the Alexandrians had developed the Platonic idea of the "Logos",—the Word. All these forms of thought, empty of any real spiritual contents, lay ready at hand for the new Religion, empty bottles to be filled with the new wine.

The author of the Fourth Gospel, whoever he was, and whenever he wrote, took the incomplete Christology of Paul, together with the highest there was in paganism, and carried them both up boldly above Judaism and heathen Philosophy, into cosmology. The writer had before him the facts of the Gospels, and the interpretation of Paul. He takes the facts and lifts them into the category of the divine. At the very beginning of his Gospel he applies a new term to Christ, the term which the world's highest thought had prepared for this use. "In the beginning was the 'Word', and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". The term Logos, which in the New Testament is rendered "Word", is one which cannot be expressed in English except by a difficult and clumsy circumlocution. It is enough to say that the purpose of the writer was, by means of it, to identify Christ with the essence of God.

The later conception of two or more persons in the Godhead, and the essential relations of these persons to one another, does not seem to have been in his mind. He saw in the very nature of God a "Father" and a "Son". He saw the Son going out into the universe upon an errand of God, and there are intimations that he saw a third spiritual personality concerned in the transaction, but beyond this he does not go. For any farther development of the Doctrine of Christ we must go to the Church and not to the New Testament.[1] And now, what is the substance of it all? What but this?—In the career of Jesus is exhibited in actual experience both the ideal life and possibility of man; and also all of God which is expressible in terms of humanity. The motive compelling the amazing phenomenon is that God is Love; that he has begotten children; that the children, being but children, are wandering with aimless feet and perishing; that the Son, first-born among many brethren, comes with his Father's benediction to lead them home; that his way leads through pain and death; that in the radiance of his risen life some of the children at least—the Magdalen first of all—recognize him and cry, Rabboni, which is to say, Master!

The two foci of the whole orbit of Christianity are these,—Did the man Jesus pass through death,

[1] It seems proper, for certain reasons, to say that I stop in the argument before reaching the Doctrine of the "Trinity." I have stopped where the Catholic Creeds stop.

and still remain alive? and, What reason is there to believe that other men will, or can, do the same? Is the matter of personal immortality in any way connected with Jesus who is called the Christ?

BODY AND SOUL

"It may be that these things are all vain; and that our own spiral of light, no less than that of the bees, has been kindled for no other purpose save that of amusing the darkness. But also it is possible that some stupendous incident may surge from another world, from new phenomena, and either inform this effort with definite meaning, or definitely destroy it. Still our wisest plan will be to remain faithful to the destiny imposed on us, which is to subdue, and to some extent raise within and around us the obscure forces of life"—MAETERLINCK.

V

BODY AND SOUL

Since men have known anything they have known that there is some connection between the soul and the body. The first savage who was knocked senseless by the blow of another savage's club must have learned by that rude experiment that a broken head interrupted or confused his thought. One of the most amazing things, however, in the history of the race is the way in which the significance of this general fact failed to be recognized. There was here one of those vicious circles within which human thought remained confined for ages. It was assumed that mind and body were two separate and independent things, living together, but each with a life of its own. The falsity of this could not be seen until the true relation between them should be discovered; and the true relation could not be seen until the false assumption was abandoned. So the matter remained until our own time. The soul was believed to inhabit the body as a tenant dwells in a house upon an uncertain lease. That the two should interact upon each other was no more thought than that a house could affect the character of a tenant. The sum of knowledge was that when the house fell into

decay or was broken up by catastrophe, the tenant moved away. Aberrations or confusions of the mind were accounted for by the operations of other spirits. Possession, obsession, demoniacal influences, accounted for insanity, and free and independent existence of the mind accounted for sanity. It is hardly more than a century since the nexus of mind and body began to be studied. When Hartley announced his theory that mental action was dependent upon definite functions of the brain he met with almost universal incredulity. When Cabanis, half a century later, delivered his brutal dictum that "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile", he shocked society, not because he said a thing grossly, but because he said it at all. Now it has become part of everyday knowledge that mind and body are so essentially interrelated that the diverse faculties of the mind are bound up with certain specific portions of the brain and nervous system. Whatever may be said of the overfanciful refinement of the anatomist in trying to locate too minutely the nervous areas which are concerned with definite psychic activities, the general fact is accepted. We do not now send our insane to be exorcised. We do not hold a sick man morally responsible for his mental or moral vagaries. The whole world allows that physical lesion produces a state of mind. But the implications of this admission are incalculable. Dr. Keene reports this case to me. A lad of fifteen is brought to him suffering from epilepsy. He is a partial im-

becile, slavering, violent, obscene, untruthful, thievish, a foul travesty of humanity,—a youthful Caliban. Certain symptoms point to a pressure upon a certain spot of his brain. An unnoticed and forgotten scar confirms the diagnosis. The skull is trephined, the pressure removed, and the epilepsy is cured. But that is the least of it. His obscenity, deceit, and dishonesty are cured also. Not seven devils have been cast out of his soul, but a little point of bone has been lifted out of his brain. The result is the same. But the barest recognition of this fact renders necessary a new definition of the soul. The "soul" has seemingly been convicted of false pretences. Instead of being an independent entity, living in the body and dominating it, it appears to be but a convenient word to designate the complex sum total of the highest output of the organized body. As Haeckel puts it, "all the phenomena of the psychic life are without exception bound up with certain material changes in the living substance of the body. We do not attribute any peculiar 'essence' to its soul. We consider the *psyche* to be merely a collective idea of all the psychic functions of protoplasm".

This is the last word of science upon the soul. Nor can we dismiss it or disregard it as only the *ipse dixit* of an extreme scientific dogmatist. No doubt Professor Haeckel can be fairly so called. But then all biologists, chemists, physicians agree with him up to this point. Whatever we may find the soul to be over and above, this fact we must reckon with, that it

is as dependent upon matter for its being as matter is dependent upon it for its organization. And this interdependence of mind and matter exists through every step in the range of living things. In the lowest forms of living creatures the whole protoplasmic cellular mass is all body and all mind. Without organs or differentiated faculties, any portion of it responds to any stimulus which may touch it. In the next higher stage the mind begins to be localized. Rudimentary sense organs begin to appear, little protoplasmic filaments and pigment spots become the forerunners of organs of perception. In another stage the nervous system becomes sufficiently organized to show phenomena which cannot be distinguished from intelligence. Finally the highest of all psychic action shows itself by converging all sensation upon a certain specific spot of the nervous substance of the brain, and being reflected back in self-consciousness. There is no break or gap or interruption in the long series of evolution. From the beginning to the end physical progress and psychical progress are bound up together. They do not seem to move always in parallel lines or with an equal pace, but to be interrelated parts of one living, creeping, climbing life. Mind, or at least something so much like mind that their phenomena cannot be distinguished, seems to belong to organized matter down to its very lowest form. Indeed the highest intellectual faculties seem to be but aggregations and correlations of innumerable primary sensations, and

to be dependent upon the action of remote centres, so that "memory" and "volition" may fairly be said to be functions of each and every microscopic body-cell. The ancient chasm between animal and vegetable life has been long filled up. The microscope furnished the tool. Now it has been established that the animal and the vegetable are but bifurcated branches of a tree whose stem and roots are in common. Nor does inexorable science stop there. The genealogy of the protoplasmic cell itself has been traced. Every multicellular organism begins its life as a stem-cell, an impregnated ovum. Even at the beginning the cell has a psychic life of its own. And underneath this lies a region wherein the chemical processes of the not living and the psychic action of the living meet and mingle.

It seems probable that that mysterious and inscrutable thing which we call "life" is being always secreted, as it were, from inorganic matter, in the secret places of the earth and sea. It looks as though the old dictum, "*ex ovum ovo*", would have to be qualified at least. Spontaneous Generation may be a fact after all. The chemist and the biologist have done many marvellous things. If they have not been able to transform any atom of dead matter into living, Dr. Loeb and others have done something so much like it that it is best not to deny the possibility longer. Moreover, it is hasty to conclude that because men have never done it, it is never being done. It is hard to believe that the sum total of life has

remained a constant quantity since the creation of the world. God's laboratory of nature is constructed upon an enormously complex scale. Because the chemist with his vials and retorts cannot produce life from lifeless matter establishes no presumption that it is not being done continually in ocean's depth or in that boundless region of the infinitely little beyond the ken of the microscope. Above all it is perilous to build a philosophy or a religious faith upon a foundation which would be destroyed if the *generatio equivoca* should turn out to be a fact. Through the efforts of chemist and biologists, the gap between the inorganic and the organic worlds which once seemed to be infinite, has been constantly narrowed. No student of the physical sciences would be surprised to learn any day that the bridge which spans it had been discovered.

Now the whole line of thought briefly sketched above is absolutely new. Not only were St. Paul and Augustine and Thomas Aquinas utterly unaware of the facts, but so were Calvin and Jonathan Edwards and Bishop Butler. No doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, or of the life to come, formulated even fifty years ago, can be satisfactory to the man of to-day. The actual amount of knowledge accumulated during these years concerning the nature and laws of life and death, of generation and decay, of force and energy, and their transformations, is greater by an immeasurable increment than the sum of all that preceded. To refuse to take account of it

would not only be futile, but would write us down as less intelligent than the Fathers, who availed themselves of all the science they possessed to elucidate and fortify their beliefs.

But we cannot deny or evade the fact that the new biology and physics have overclouded the common hope of life in the world to come. The simple dualism upon which that hope has heretofore been based is no longer believable. The phenomenon of a human personality can no longer be accounted for by the assumption of a temporary union of an immortal soul and a perishable body. The nexus has been seen to be, not arbitrary and artificial, but organic. This conviction, which cannot be resisted, has overweighted and sunk in many their belief in the life everlasting. To many this has been a burden more heavy than would be a judge's doom to death. They see that what they call the body and what they call the soul are so identified in their whole career, from the germ cell to the grave, that they cannot any longer think of the psychic personality surviving the break-up of the physical organism. When they attempt to do so, they find the same intellectual helplessness they would if bidden to think of shadow without substance or extension without form. For them not only has the hope of immortality faded, but the very existence of such a present fact as soul has become difficult to believe. So correlated are psychic and physical energy that the soul of man threatens to disappear as an objective reality.

At this point the attempt has often been made to find relief by drawing a line through psychic phenomena, and labelling those nearest to the physical basis "Instinct", and those higher up "Reason". This latter, it is contended, together with the Conscience or ethical faculty, constitute the soul proper and are peculiar to man. Grant, it is said, all that biology claims concerning the mental life of animals, still man is marked off by the possession of psychic qualities so different in kind from those of the lower creatures that he still stands unique in the possession of a soul. This has proven, however, to be but a frail dike set against the incoming of the tide. So long as psychologists confined their researches to the human mind, this position remained tenable. As early as 1760 Remeirus called in question the validity of the distinction between Instinct and Reason. The time, however, was not ripe, and his discoveries attracted little notice. But during the last half-century Darwin and Romanes, Sir John Lubbock, Wundt and Buchner, Ladd, Moulton and James, and their co-laborers have conducted experiments so many and so careful that the former classification of psychic action into Reason and Instinct has been definitely abandoned. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that psychic actions may be thus distinguished, but that reason is not confined to man nor instinct to beasts. For example, among Indians and other savages the sense of direction is, so far as one sees, just as much an instinct as it is in the homing pigeon.

The faculty, moreover, seems to be the same in kind, and not differing greatly in degree. Nor is this the only " instinct " of man. The newborn babe knows how to suck. The young mother knows how to hold the babe to the breast. Sex desires know the way to their gratification, and the like.

But the important fact for our purpose is that those higher faculties, such as reason, choice, number, shame, and duty show themselves in creatures far below man in the graduated scale of being. We need not stop to notice the strange wisdom of the ant and the bee, whose lilliputian commonwealths might in many ways be models for human cities. The " reason ", however, which they display shows such striking limitations and peculiarities that it may be set aside, if we choose, as automatic or purely reflex. A characteristic of Reason is to discern an object desired, and to use rational and suitable means to attain it. A very few instances, chosen at random from the mass of experiment and observation recorded, will suffice. I begin with an experiment made by myself. During a hunting trip I was in camp with a friend in the wilderness of the far Northwest. A mile above the camp was a beavers' dam. We visited or passed it almost every day, and every day saw the marks of the beavers' nocturnal handiwork. One day, to see what the inhabitants of the aquatic village would do, we broke a chasm two feet wide in their dam. Next day the gap was mended. In the night the animals had gone ashore, cut down a tree eight inches

in diameter which stood more than a hundred feet from the stream. The trunk of the tree was of no use for their purposes. They felled it to procure the small limbs which grew twenty feet from the ground. The chips showed that they had cut the limbs where they lay into pieces of the proper length to mend the hole in their dam thirty yards distant. Each stick was just long enough to reach across the break and allow enough to lap over and hold at either end. These they had conveyed to the place, inserted, interlaced with small twigs, and tamped with earth and leaves so that the dam was good as new. Now, note what they had done. First they had surveyed the breach, and seen how, and how alone, it could be mended. Then they sought the suitable material for the repairs. For this they felled a tree to secure the limbs which were in sight, but not within the reach of animals who could not climb. Then they ascertained the length required for the pieces to be used. Then they cut them off *in situ* and carried them to where they were needed. The ultimate purpose of it all was to save the doors of their houses from being exposed by the threatened lowering of the water. In what way, then, does this action differ in *kind* from the reason of a man who builds a house?

Take another instance quoted by Romanes from Thompson. In his camp in the jungle he had a monkey tied to a long upright bamboo pole by a chain running on a ring, which allowed the monkey to

climb to the top, where was a seat upon which he passed most of his time. While he sat there, the thievish crows which swarmed about stole the food which was placed every morning at the foot of his pole. To this he vainly expressed his objection by chattering and slipping down in vain effort to catch them. "One morning, however, he appeared to be seriously ill; he closed his eyes, dropped his head, and exhibited other evidence of severe suffering. No sooner were his ordinary rations placed at the foot of his pole than the crows, watching their opportunity, descended in numbers, and as usual began to demolish his provisions. The monkey now began to descend the pole by slow degrees as though the effort overpowered him, and as if so overcome by illness that his remaining strength was hardly equal to the exertion. When he reached the ground he rolled about for some time, seeming in great agony, until he found himself close to the vessel where the crows had by this time wellnigh devoured his food. Then he lay apparently in a state of complete insensibility. After a little a crow plucked up courage to approach and stretch his neck toward the food. As quick as thought the monkey seized it and secured it from doing farther mischief. He now began to chatter and grin with every expression of gratified triumph, while the crows flew about cawing, as if deprecating the chastisement about to be inflicted upon their brother. The monkey continued for a while to chatter and grin in triumph; he then deliberately placed

the crow between his knees, and began to pluck it with the most humorous gravity. When he had completely stripped it, except of the larger feathers in the wings and tail, he flung it in the air, from where it fell to the ground with a stunning shock. He then ascended his pole, and the next time his food was brought, not a single crow approached it." Now, in what essential quality was the mental action of this monkey different from that of a farmer, with a sense of humor, who sets a trap for the crows devouring his corn?

Once again, selecting from that treasure house of facts gathered by Darwin. "A troop of baboons were observed crossing a valley in Abyssinia. Some had already ascended the opposite mountain, and some were still in the valley, when the latter were attacked by dogs, but the old males immediately hurried down from the rocks, with mouths open, roaring so fearfully that the dogs quickly drew back. They were again encouraged to the attack, but by this time all the baboons had reascended the heights excepting a young child of about six months, who, loudly calling for aid, climbed upon a block of rock, and was surrounded. Thereupon, one of the largest males came down again from the mountain, slowly went to the young one, coaxed him down and carried him away, the dogs being too much astonished to make an attack". What does this action of the baboon show different from that supreme moral sense

which moves its possessor to imperil his life for his brother?

Such facts as the above might be quoted to fill volumes from the mass of literature upon the subject accumulated within a generation. One of them, however, is as good as a thousand. The effect of them all has been to establish the truth of the generalization made by Darwin fifty years ago. "The difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, is certainly one of degree and not of kind. The senses and instincts, the various emotions and faculties, of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient, or even sometimes in a well-developed, condition in the lower animals". And Darwin lies, without protest, in Westminster Abbey!

We have reached the point where the old phrases, "the immortality of the soul", and "the resurrection of the body" must take on new meanings if they are to be comprehended, and must deal with new difficulties if they are to be retained. If the truth which these phrases have heretofore expressed sufficiently well is to be kept alive among men, its roots must be traced to a reason immeasurably deeper down in the nature of things than is generally realized. If it be the fact, as it appears to be, that belief in a future life is being given up by intelligent men, we may be assured that it is not because the "instinct of living" is any less strong in them than in their forefathers. It is not that they desire life less, or because they are more willing to be resolved into

nothingness. It is because their hope has met defeat at the hands of other truth which has slowly shown itself. There are multitudes for whom neither the old phrases nor the old arguments will any longer suffice. To clear these away is an ungracious and distasteful task. They are so intertwined with religious sentiment and human affection that to disturb them seems to some little short of a wanton outrage. They are formulated in creeds, enshrined in poetry, hymns, liturgies. They are ingrained in the very fibre of religious faith and are powerful sanctions for conduct. Why disturb them? The only answer is, it is always best in the long run to know the truth. It is better that the simple Christian within the Church should have his beliefs disturbed than that his brother should be kept out of the Kingdom by these beliefs. It is not only better intrinsically, but it is also the way of Christ. The little ones whom he warned against offending were those who were kept out of the Kingdom by the inconsiderate action of those within. We need have no fear that belief in "the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come" will be abandoned, provided only it be conceived of in such a way as will allow it to be correlated with all else which we know to be true.

THE BASIS OF IMMORTALITY

" In progress toward the goal, nature will have to be consulted continuously. Already, in the case of the ephemerids, nature has produced a complete cycle of normal life ending in natural death. In the problem of his own fate, man must not be content with the gifts of nature; he must direct them by his own effort. Just as he has been able to modify the nature of animals and plants, he must attempt to modify his own constitution so as to readjust its disharmonies ".

METCHNIKOFF.

VI

THE BASIS OF IMMORTALITY

Two things are usually taken for granted in all discussions concerning future life. One is the essential immortality of the soul; the other is that the same kind and quality of soul is common to all men. Are these assumptions warranted? To merely raise the question will seem preposterous to some. Nevertheless the question must be asked. For the present I postpone any attempt to define sharply the term *soul*, and use it in its popular sense, which is for this stage of the argument sufficiently definite.

It is commonly assumed that each individual soul had a beginning, but is so constituted and compounded of such stuff that it is intrinsically imperishable. This belief lies at the bottom of the current conceptions of Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. To many it will be a surprise to be assured that this is not a Christian belief at all, but a pagan one. Neither is it now, nor has it ever been, the general belief even in paganism. The great mass of savage and semi-civilized men have never had any clear opinion upon the matter either way. Indeed, they do not think of "the soul" at all in the way we do. They often have a sort of vague notion of a shadowy

double of the individual, which may for a time flit about his tomb or roam in happy hunting grounds; but they do not possess any such abstract conceptions as " eternal ", " immortal ", or " self-existent ". When they advance farther in the path of thought they either think of the personality maintaining a kind of family, corporate perpetuity, as throughout Eastern Asia generally; or else they think of the individual as seeking to lose his identity, and finally losing it in Nirvana, which, for the individual consciousness at any rate, is the end of being. The general thought of intelligent paganism can hardly be better stated or by a more competent witness than Wu Ting Fang, sometime Chinese Ambassador to the United States:—

" What I understand by religion is a system of doctrine and worship. As such it recognizes the existence of a divine supreme being and of spirits having control of human destinies, who want to bring men back from the error of their ways by holding up the fear of everlasting punishment and offering everlasting happiness for goodness. One of its cardinal doctrines is that there is such a thing as life after death. I must confess that the thought of the immortality of the soul is pleasant. I wish it were true; but all the reasoning of Plato cannot make it anything more than a strong probability. I am not aware that in the advance of modern science we have advanced one step more from uncertainty than did Plato. It must not be said that Confucius denies the existence of these things, but regards all speculation upon them as useless and impracticable. He would be called an agnostic in these days. 'What is death'? asked a disciple of him, and he replied, 'You don't know life yet; how can you know about death'? Such are the guarded words of

Confucius on this subject. Life itself is full of mysteries too deep for human thought to fathom. There is no use in trying to tear apart the veil of death to take a peep at the place beyond. No one has ever been able to add one tittle of evidence concerning the future of man after death, and of the world of spirits".

The fact is that only within Christendom and Islam is the immortality of the individual soul assumed. To the contention that belief in future life has been held always and everywhere and by all men, the only reply is, the facts are not so. It is as far as possible from being true to-day. The overwhelming majority of men are now, as always, at too low a stage of intellectual development to comprehend the thought. The most that can be said is that among most people is a rather vague and incoherent notion that the individual will retain a kind of tenuous existence for a longer or shorter time after death. But it is, at its clearest, only a phantom-like being, and they do not conceive it as eternal, nor does the term eternal convey any meaning to them. Moreover, the testimony of the most trustworthy observer is that from among many peoples this whole set of ideas is entirely absent. The Bushmen of South Africa, the Veddahs of Ceylon, the Blacks of Australia, the Diggers of Utah, and such like do not seem to have any more idea of a post-obituary existence than do the beasts of the field. Indeed, the history of thought witnesses, as clearly as it can witness to anything, that it is not until a really high state of intellectual

development is reached that any idea of future life emerges, and that belief in the soul as a self-existent entity is not reached until intellection has well-nigh reached its summit. Not until Democritus and Empedocles and Plato and Socrates, and Epicurus and Seneca become possible does the idea of immortality appear. At a date much earlier the Egyptians had wrought out scientifically their scheme of the future life; but they by no means predicated it of all men, but only of the "good" and of these only after they had been rendered immortal by union with Osisiris. Among the early Hebrews the idea was scarcely present at all. Says the Grand Rabbi Stein: "What causes most surprise in reading the Pentateuch is the silence it seems to keep respecting the most fundamental and consoling truths. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body are able powerfully to fortify man against passion and vice, and to strengthen his steps in the rugged paths of virtue. But one searches in vain for these truths which he desires so ardently. He does not find either them or the resurrection of the dead".

Among the later Jews, the contemporaries of Jesus, the notions concerning the soul and its destiny were so incoherent and contradictory that it appears hopeless to attempt their reconstruction. Speaking broadly, they did not conceive of the soul as an entity separate and independent of the body. The dream of a corporate or tribal immortality which

they had held before their eyes for ages had for the most part rendered them careless of the destiny of the individual. If "Israel" were to abide to the ages of ages, it mattered little what became of his children one by one. The most intelligent and influential section, the Sadducees, were frank materialists. They believed "neither in angels nor demons nor in the resurrection of the dead". The Pharisees were divided into paltry schools, and were busy debating such trivial puzzles as whether or not one should rise with his clothes or naked, whether he would burrow like a mole underneath the earth so as to rise in the sacred soil of Judea, or rise in pagan soil and be instantly rapt through the air to the holy land. But none of them believed in or expected resurrection or immortality for any but members of the chosen race. An immortality belonging to man as such, and based upon the essential deathlessness of the soul, was utterly foreign to their thought. Dr. Piepenbring states their belief thus:—

"Along with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead which arose and was developed among the Palestinian Jews, we see the doctrine of the immortality of the soul take shape among the Jews of Alexandria. It appears for the first time in the apochryphal book of Wisdom. According to this book souls pre-exist, and are confined to the body as in a prison. The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God; after they have passed through the crucible of trial they shine, they judge the nations, they govern peoples; thus the righteous live forever. The wicked seem to be fated to annihilation. These

ideas are still farther developed by Philo, by whom it clearly appears they were borrowed from Plato".

I pass over for the present the teaching of Jesus and the New Testament. That must form the basis of the truth we seek later on, and must be examined more at leisure. Awaiting that I ask,—What did the people of the early Christian Church, say during the first four centuries, believe generally concerning the soul and its possible destiny? We need not be surprised to find that their beliefs were confused and contradictory. No matter what the teaching of Jesus in the premises may or may not have been, the early Christians came to it with presuppositions and habits of thought already formed. As has been already pointed out, it is never possible for a man to disentangle himself at once from his old beliefs in taking in new truth. Both Greek and Roman preconceptions were present, as well as Hebrew ones. Indeed they were far more potent; for even in the first century the Church had moved completely away from its Hebrew entourage, and was thereafter recruited from heathens. A careful study of the ante-Nicene "Fathers" can but convince one that in and among them a number of ethnic notions were striving to express, each in its own terms, the truth which Christ had left among them. The early Christians had all been reared in the religions either of Judea or Greece or Rome. Those among them who had been reared Jews unconsciously transferred their idea of a corporate or tribal immortality from their

old faith to the new, and their imaginations were filled with the vision of a "Second Coming" and a "New" Jerusalem. Those who were Greeks brought to the new religion the Platonic idea that the individual soul is imperishable, being in fact an articulate portion of the substance of the mind of God. Those of Roman antecedents, having no inherited belief in a future life of any kind, were better prepared to understand the truth of Christ. The interaction of all these fragments of previous philosophy produced a confusion and uncertainty of mind which was not clarified for five centuries. Then the masterful Augustine, the man who fixed the lines in which the thought of the civilized world ran from the sixth century to the nineteenth, took Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul, disengaged it from metempsychosis and transmigration, and gained for that general acceptance which it has held to this day. Clement (*I. Epis.*, xxvi) teaches the resurrection of the good, and proves it by an appeal to the well-known phenomenon of the phœnix rising from his ashes, but has no expectation of future life for the wicked. Justin Martyr in one place (*I. Apol.*, xvii) expects the resurrection both of the just and the unjust, and proves it by appealing to the recognized fact that departed human souls are even now in a state of sensation, as is shown by their being invoked by magi and dream-senders, as well as at the oracles of Dodona and Pytho. In another place, however (*Dialog. Tryph.*, v.), he expressly denounces and

dismisses the Platonic doctrine that the soul is immortal. Athenagoras (*De Resurec.*) takes for granted unqualifiedly the native immortality of the soul, and makes a striking argument for the resurrection of the body. Tertullian in his treatises *On the Soul* and *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* gives by far the fullest presentation of what was commonly believed in his circles, but it is quite impossible to make him consistent with himself or with other Christian writers of the same period. Upon the whole, however, he leaves the impression, afterward confirmed and fixed by Augustine, that he believes the soul to have an independent existence of its own, and to be by its own nature indestructible. The truth seems to be that just as the Greek influence gained domination in the early Church the Platonic doctrine of a natural immortality which it brought with it came to be accepted. The notion was withstood from the first as being subversive of the very essence of Christianity. Theophilus, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Arnobius, and, most weighty of all, Athanasius in his treatise on the *Incarnation of the Word of God*, all strenuously fought against it as a pagan error which brought to naught the work of Christ. They were defeated, however, and the conception prevailed which is vulgarly common to-day, of an immortal soul and a mortal body, temporarily joined, then sundered, then reunited in an imperishable personality. Its currency has probably confused and obstructed the work of Christ

among men more than all other obstacles combined. A pagan speculation has masqueraded so long as an elemental Christian truth that now, when the intelligent world is well disposed to receive and comprehend Jesus' revelation of the life to come, Plato stands across the path and is commonly mistaken for Christ.

Thus it has been taken for granted during many centuries that "Man" occupies a unique and solitary place at the head of the ranks of living things, with an impassable chasm between him and them, and this in virtue of his possession of psychic qualities which they lack. For the purpose of the naturalist this classification is satisfactory. But for the psychologist it is quite misleading. It rests upon physical data only. There are races of existing "men" whose powers of language, for example, seem still in the transition stage between articulate and inarticulate speech. The vocal utterances of the Bushmen of Africa consisted largely of a series of peculiar clicks that were certainly not articulate speech, though on the road to it. The Pygmies of Central Africa seem similarly to occupy an intermediate position in the development of language. Those who have endeavored to talk with them speak of their utterance as being inarticulate sound. In short, the great abyss which was of old thought to lie between the language of man and that of the lower animals, has largely vanished, and through the

labors of philologists we can trace the stepping stones over every portion of the wide gap.

The same thing is true concerning reason, memory, sympathy, and love. The simple fact is that in the attempt to trace the origin, development, and destiny of the soul, the naturalist's classification of "man" and "animal" must be disregarded. In advance one cannot say where the line between mortal and immortal creatures will be found. It may conceivably coincide with the one which marks off *Genus Homo, Class Mammalia, Order Primates;* or it may be found to run below that so as to include some of man's humble kinsmen; or it may be found necessary to settle upon a line running irregularly through and amidst the ranks of men. The soul has its own laws and announces its own requirements. It may turn out that all whom we call men are not Man. For natural science it is true that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the earth". They breed together, and that settles the question of physical relationship. But there are psychic relationships between man and animal quite as intimate and as real as the physical relationship between man and man. Measured by psychic standards, the interval between the lowest man and the highest is a hundredfold greater than that between the lowest man and the highest brute. It may be humiliating, but it is true, nevertheless, that we are far more closely related to the animals on the spiritual than we are on the bodily side. A

comparative anatomist would distinguish at sight between the fossil bone of a man and of an ape. But let a certain action involving mind be described to him, and he may be quite unable to say whether the actors are men or beasts. For example, here is one related by James Forbes in his "Oriental Memoirs":—

"One of the females had been killed and her body carried to our tent. Forty or fifty of the tribe soon gathered around the tent, chattering furiously and threatening an attack, from which they were diverted only by the display of the guns, whose effects they perfectly understood. But while the others retreated the leader stood his ground, continuing his threatening. Finding this of no avail, he came to the door of the tent alone, moaning sadly, and by his gestures seemed to beg for the dead body. When it was given him he took it up in his arms and carried it away to his companions."

What we are seeking is a spiritual organism sufficiently developed to cohere through the shock of physical dissolution. If we must predicate immortality of every sentient being which possesses reason, affection, and ethical faculty, then we must enlarge the borders of Hades to receive innumerable animals. If we demand a higher psychic basis to make continued existence possible, then we may well be forced to deny it to multitudes of beings which we call men. There has seemed to be no deliverance from this dilemma, because we have assumed that the naturalist's classification of man and animal, which is real in the physical, is also valid in the psychic realm.

While it was believed that all mankind were the children of a single pair, specially created, only a few thousand years ago, the difficulty was insuperable. But now we know better. Geology has unfolded the rocky leaves of earth's history and found man's mark inscribed æons ago. His descent from pre-human and semi-human ancestry is as well established as any human belief can ever be. To say that "Evolution is not proven" is simply trifling with truth. Nothing is ever proven or can be in the sense that objection demands. But it is so well established that the world of thought and knowledge has ceased to defend it. To determine in the case of any individual being whether or not it has attained to the possession of a soul capable of continuance is difficult indeed. But it is no more and no less difficult than to decide at what point of its embryonic growth it becomes human. The ovum of a man and of a dog are absolutely indistinguishable. The human embryo runs through and recapitulates in a marvellous way the line of ascent from the low order of life, through which the race has climbed. It has been generally taken for granted that it becomes possessed of a "soul" at some point between the fertilization of the ovum and the issue from the womb. But for this there is not the slightest evidence. It has been seen that the very germs themselves have an antecedent history as strange and complex as that of the embryo. They also move, choose, select, repel, show preferences, in a

word they appear to have personalities of their own as really as does the new-born babe. The biogenesis of the soul cannot any longer be concluded between conception and birth. It is already clear that the psychic life which we call mind in man, instinct in the beast, and affinity in the germ cell is the same thing; that it develops according to laws of its own; that it is from first to last correlated with an organized material structure; that at certain stages in its upward movement it takes on new and strange forms which could not at all be predicated from any study of it at a previous stage. But the thing of supreme importance for our purpose is that the upward steps or stages of physical evolution do not at all coincide with the steps or stages of psychic evolution. Reason, of a high order, for example, is found among the cœlentera, seems to lie dormant through the reptile stage, and shows itself at unexpected and incalculable places among the mamalia. Does reason in man take on any new quality, in virtue of which every individual becomes immortal? The secret which we long to discover is this:—Does the psychic life of an individual at any stage of evolution attain to such a high, stable, and independent existence of its own that it will be able to subsist in spite of the disintegration of the physical organism with which it is correlated? What are the conditions upon which a survival must depend? Are these conditions satisfied in the psychic life to be found in the lower animals? Are the

conditions present in the case of every individual of the race which we call Man? Or is the possibility of individual immortality only reached at a point more or less defined in the progress of man himself? In fine, is man *immortal*, or is he only *immortable?*

IMMORTABILITY

" For man is, according to nature, mortal, as a being who has been made out of things which are perishable. But on account of his likeness to God he can by piety ward off and escape from his natural mortality and remain indestructible if he retain the knowledge of God, or can lose his incorruptibility if he lose his life in God ".
—ATHANASIUS.

VII

IMMORTABILITY

The problem of immortability, that is, of potential immortality, has been hopelessly confused by the traditional assumption that all those living creatures who are classed as Man on physical grounds are also Man on psychical grounds. This being assumed, the question of a future life has been one concerning a race rather than concerning individuals. This explains why all arguments for immortality have been so unconvincing. They have tried to prove too much. The considerations which would establish immortality for all men, in virtue of the qualities which they possess as men, are equally valid for many of the lower animals. The point at which we will probably have to look for immortability is not at that which separates man from the brute, but at that which separates between one kind of man and all the rest. The story is told of a distinguished Frenchman, who, to the long argument of a friend against the possibility of a future life, replied, "You say you are not immortal? Very probably you are not; but I am". This is much more than a smart repartee. It is the solution of a problem otherwise insoluble. Whatever may

be the difficulty in drawing such a line among men does not concern us at this point in the argument. It is enough for the present to point out that it is far less difficult to draw the line this way than any other way. We but faintly realize how low in the scale of being the lowest man is, or how high the highest is. Beings are living upon the earth to-day at every conceivable stage between that of the semi-human Akka, who has no religion, no superstitions, no developed moral sense, and the enlightened American or European Christian whose sense of moral personality is far stronger than is his sense of physical being. It appears to be most reasonable that at some point, yet to be defined, but between these extremes, the " power of an endless life " is reached.

We have now reached the point where the crucial question must be faced. If we are driven to believe that immortality may be predicated of some members of the race, or of one kind of man, then we must ask, Where is the line to be drawn? At what point in the upward movement does the individual personality take on those qualities which may enable it to survive the death of the body? Upon what does immortality depend? What are its conditions? How can those conditions be fulfilled? Are they at all under the control of the individual will? Or is the individual on entering into the eternal life as passive and helpless as he is in being ushered into this world from the womb?

Before attempting any reply to these questions it will be well to stop long enough to make one or two needful distinctions. In the first place, there have been not a few, both in ancient and modern times, who have maintained the truth of a "Conditional Immortality". But they have in every case assumed that all human beings are by nature possessed of the same endowments. If some become immortal and others do not, it is only because immortality is, as it were, impressed upon some from the outside. It is a gift arbitrarily bestowed. It is because one has been born of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, and another has not; or because one has partaken of the imperishable body and blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and another has not; or it is because one has by a deliberate act of will "accepted Christ", and on the instant been "born again" or such like. The "condition" which the advocates of conditional immortality have always propounded have been extraneous, arbitrary, artificial. What we maintain is something radically different. No doubt the conditions named above may be found to be concerned, but the distinction itself is far deeper, more natural and reasonable, even though it be far more difficult to state. It is a biological process we are seeking to trace, and a biological classification we attempt to discover. It may be that the biological classification we are in search of may turn out to be also a religious one. We believe it will. But it will be religious because

it corresponds to an actual reality already existent, and not because of an arbitrary divine arrangement. What we maintain is that if any human life becomes capable of passing on into another with personality intact, it will be because such a life has already reached to a stage of spiritual fixedness and stability which will make survival "natural" to it, and destruction "unnatural", and that such an achievement, if it be reached at all, must be along the extension of the same path by which the soul has climbed up from the primordial slime.

Again, it is of the first importance that we should realize the limitations of the problem before us. I have throughout used the term *immortality* as equivalent to survival after death. It is necessary, however, from this point on, either to avoid the word altogether or to reach an understanding as to the sense in which it is used. Speaking accurately, immortality is a quality which can never be predicated of any soul, either here or hereafter. "God alone hath immortality" is not only a scriptural, but a scientific datum. Eternity is a category of the unconditioned. But the soul is an organism; and the condition of every organism continuing in being is that it shall be able to function, and that it shall correspond with its environment. In this sense we do not look for immortality. Our quest is an humbler yet sufficiently momentous one. We simply try to ascertain from the data available whether we can find a means of transit for any human personality

from this life to the next one. Whether, if that prove possible, its life there shall be brief or long is a question not now before us.

The world teems with life. The sea swarms with fishes, the land is carpeted with plants. Living things populate the surface, creep and burrow beneath the soil. Life is everywhere, in every drop of water, in every grain of dust, filling the still summer air with its multitudinous drone, roaring in the streets of men's great cities, crowding and choking in the forests of the tropics. Try as we may, we cannot adequately realize its abundance, its multitude, its myriad forms and ways. It emerges silent and unseen from inorganic matter, and crowds every step of the long, strange, tortuous path upward to its supreme manifestation in human self-consciousness.

When we look at it steadily we are arrested by the significant fact that the ultimate goal of each individual is to pass on to another the life which it possesses. If it can only reproduce, it is ready to die. Its organs of reproduction are the ones to which all others are ministrant. Its provisions for locomotion and digestion are but means to this end. Countless millions only exist long enough to copulate, and give up their lives in the act. In the vegetable world this is the universal rule. To the same end the instincts and appetites are subsidized. The "imperious instinct of propagation" dominates all desires, is stronger than pain or even the fear of

death. In all except the highest forms it is not even left to choice. Reproduce they must, even if it cost life. In the whole organic world every other consideration is subordinated to the single purpose of keeping the stream of life flowing. This determination is so inexorable that, lest it may be defeated, a thousand individuals are brought into life only to perish, in order to make sure that from among them all one may reproduce. Even in man the provision for reproduction determines the whole plan of his being. His term of life is adjusted to the length of time required to reach puberty. When his power to reproduce declines, he begins to die. His intellectual habits are correlated to this function. His social habits are ultimately fixed with reference to this need. "Be fruitful and multiply" is the primordial command stamped upon the very constitution of animate nature.

But once this truth has been realized, it leads us to confront the supreme difficulty. Life seems to be everything, and the *individual* nothing. If only the species can win its way forward and upward, the unit appears to be of no value. We appear to be caught in the current of a mighty moving stream of life which will assimilate our juices and sink us in the slime or fling us dead upon the shore, without ruth, even as without anger. The life is everything; the organism in which the life is for the moment conserved seems to be nothing. Now, if an individual immortality is to become possible, nothing less

is necessary than a reversal of this elemental law. It is clear that that can only be achieved if an individual be found who is stronger than his species. Up to this point life sweeps round everlastingly in a closed circle, from seed through plant or animal to seed again, and so about continually. If escape from it be ever possible it must be at a tangent and by some kind of individual whose life orbit sweeps far enough away from its material centre to be caught in some mighty attraction from beyond. And, to continue the figure, the difference between the individual who passes on and the one who remains enchained within the circle of nature need be only infinitesimal, provided it occur at the right point. An illustration which may serve to make the matter plainer may be drawn from mathematical physics. Take the case of two bodies moving through space. One of them has for its path the extremest conic section, a curve with the greatest possible eccentricity. The path of the other is a parabola. The difference between the two curves is literally infinitesimal; yet moving in the one the body must ultimately return to the point from which it started, while the other will move out into infinite space. May we not similarly expect that a difference correspondingly slight in the psychic movement of an organism may produce a result equally important?

In the lowest order of life there are really no individuals at all. It is simply a speck of protoplasmic jelly, uniform and slightly sensitive. It

has no limbs, organs, or members. To multiply it merely breaks in two. Each part is as much or as little offspring as it is parent or self. Each half, in turn, divides again, and so the propagation goes on. It cannot be said that individuality belongs to any of its units, for each unit is divisible, and it is the essence of personality to be indivisible. In a higher stage of being a sort of compound or communistic individuality begins to show. Not until a comparatively high stage of evolution does the real individual appear "whose life is in itself". Then he appears, only to live his little life, beget a child if he can, and perish. The multitude of living forms merge as it were into a mighty river flowing through the æons and dropping over the precipice to death, more numerous than all the drops at Niagara. Nor does the spectacle cause moral distress or revolt until the individual atoms come to be of such consequence that we rebel at the aimlessness of it all. No beast has been defrauded of any due because it has to die. Mere existence and sensation have been for it a boon, whether its life be short or long. This is also true of the brute-like man, and, what is of more consequence, it is his own judgment in the case. He clings to life for its own sake, and the lower in the scale he is the less tenacious he is. Even Laertes can face the end with a light heart because he has had his life. Not till a Hamlet arrives does he begin to question whether it is better to be or not to be.

Considering the whole human race, from its primeval brutishness until now, it is probable that the overwhelming majority have no unliquidated claim upon existence. They have had the gift of living, have made of it all that could be made, and there is nothing more due them. But there are many, surely, of which more can be said. Their psychical life is stronger than their physical; their affections are stronger than their appetites; their spirits have established so many relations with other personalities, with nature as a whole, with ideals which are more real to their apprehension than is matter itself, with the Infinite Person whom they feel enfolding themselves and nature in his arms, that to think of themselves coming to naught because the foundation of a material body is cut from under them by death, brings to our feeling a sense of distress and unreasonableness which is intolerable. Such an one has already learned the secret of going beyond himself by his sympathies. He is an individual, as the inorganic crystal is, as the germ cell is, as the brute is, as the animal man is,—but he is something more. In common with all these he is under the law which subordinates the individual to the species, and disregards it when it has once served its use of reproduction. But he has, to some degree at least, and in some portion of his being, escaped from this law by having come into the possession of certain qualities which cannot be propagated by reproduction. He did not reach these

qualities at the point where he became man by bodily structure, or by the possession of mind, but at an uncertain point high above that of primitive man. But wherever and whenever this new faculty is reached, we may fairly expect that it will be preserved in being. This conviction does not come alone, or in the first place, from religious faith, but from watching nature's ways. One thing science knows quite well; that is, that nature does not hesitate a moment to change or to reverse methods which she has used through long stretches of time whenever she has something to gain by such reversal. If it shall appear at any stage in the upward movement that more is gained by keeping an individual in a continued life than by breaking him up for sake of the species, we may expect that nature will find some way to do so. The inexorable forces of gravitation and chemical affinity had their own way in the universe for an eternity, until they were arrested and turned about in the interest of life. Overproduction, and the survival of the fittest held their ruthless sway until they were reversed in the interest of affection. The supremacy of the race at the expense of the individual we may expect to continue just until something in the individual comes to be of more importance than that law, and no longer.

JESUS' TEACHING

" The most common of those feelings which present obstacles to the pursuit of truth are aversion to doubt; desire of a safe medium; the love of system; the dread of the character of inconstancy; the dread of innovation; undue deference to human authority; the fear of criticism; regard to seeming consistency ".—WHATELY, " On Bacon's Essays ".

VIII

JESUS' TEACHING

The idea of "eternal life" has always been associated with that of moral goodness. Evil and death are cause and effect. Righteousness and long life; sin and degradation; this is what men have always believed to be in some way a fundamental truth. But it is greatly to be doubted whether they have realized how true it is.

In a very real sense a race or a people or a nation is an individual, with a personality of its own. The long history of the past is strewn with the dust of dead peoples. In a few instances their rise, climax, decline, and decay lie within the historic period. No doubt these arose from among the ruins of innumerable earlier peoples. Why have some survived while others perished? Why do one or two peoples, or families of peoples to-day feel and show the sense of secure being, while others are slowly decaying under our eyes? The reason is, a people's length of healthy life depends upon its goodness; not, finally upon its physical vigor, or its mental advance, but its moral worth. Mr. Gladstone maintained that the physical and intellectual equipment of the average Greek of the time of Pericles, was

considerably higher than that of the average Englishman or American of to-day. It is very possible that the Babylonians and Egyptians more than equalled us in these regards. The phallic symbols strewing the ruins by the Euphrates, and the abominations sketched upon the walls of Pompeii give the clue to their decay. What prevented the American Indian, in possession since the dawn of time of the most abundant region of the earth, with his great physical development and mental force, from developing a civilization which would have been abiding? What explains the ruin of Rome and Constantinople, and the states of Asia Minor and North Africa? The answer is in every case the same; they perished from lack of goodness. No other quality could procure for them continuance in existence. The Teutons have endured, and promise to endure, in virtue of certain racial moral qualities which they developed ages ago, and which have saved them from being brutalized by their own strength, or from sinking in their stupidity. Goodness can thus arrest and turn back for nations the primal law of growth, vigor, and decline. Is it too much to believe that it may do the same for the individual?

But if anything like this be true, it is clear that the chance of future life turns upon a question of present fact. Does one, or does he not, in any instance, possess a moral energy sufficiently strong and coherent to dominate his life? The mere possession of a potential faculty for goodness, or the

actual manifestation of a rudimentary ethical sense will not suffice. Brutes have that much. The races which perished had the same. Only a moral nature developed far enough to take command over the turbulent appetites and errant mind will serve the end. Now, it is clear that some possess this quality, and some do not. It is a quality correlated in some degree, though not very closely, with intellectual forwardness. A simple hind may be very good, and an undevout astronomer may be morally an imbecile.

We have seen above that there are now living whole tribes of undeveloped savages, who have no more moral energy than the brute,—for it must be remembered that the brutes have some. To raise the question of immortality concerning them would be irrelevant or premature. They have not yet entered really into the human life which now is, to say nothing of that which is to come. At every other plane of biologic advance, an individual here and there, no doubt, rises far above either his fathers or his children, and wins for himself the power of infinite progression. But the place of escape from the closed ring of what we call nature is not at the body or the mind, but the conscience. If that gate be not found, or if it be too narrow for egress, there cannot, in the nature of the case, be any thoroughfare. Nor is it easy to expect immortality for multitudes far closer to us than the Pygmies or the Bushmen. As one wanders observantly and thoughtfully amongst the crowds which

teem in the purlieus of a great Christian city, as he watches their faces, listens to their meagre speech, penetrates to the interior of their shallow lives, realizes their brutishness and mischievousness, becomes familiar with their desires and ideals of life, above all, as he sees their look of blank insensibility to any moral appeal, he is hard put to it not to ask himself,—are these really men? I confess frankly that when I have tried to speak to certain kinds of men of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come", I have felt that the effort was little less vain than would have been the same exhortation to my good dog. One can, it is true, make his appeal to the fear of death, and can thus evoke a response in the form of terror. But one can do the same by pointing his gun at a predatory crow. The fear of death and the belief in a future life are two entirely different things, and have no necessary relation to each other. So far as one can see, the fear of death, as an emotion, does not differ either in degree or kind between the natural man and the natural beast. The natural man's life may be Edenic or it may be barren and squalid, but he does not come in sight of the tree of life until he leaves it. Myriads still dwell in it, being yet as "Adam" was. While at that stage the questions which concern them are those which are asked by zoology, comparative anatomy, and psychology. Religion simply cannot speak to them at all until they become as gods, knowing good and evil. When that

stage is reached, and not till then, does eternal life come within the possibilities. "This is eternal life, to know God"; and God is apprehended only through the moral sense.

We may admit without hesitation, that it is not possible to define the point at which the capacity of eternal life is reached in the development of the individual. This does not touch the central truth. No physicist can draw a line and say, here inorganic matter becomes organic; no botanist can say, here vegetable life becomes animal; no naturalist can say, here the invertebrate ends and the vertebrate begins; no psychologist can say, here instinct ceases and reason begins. No anthropologist can draw a line below man, or through men, or in the life of the individual man, and say, here, now, is conscience. But facts do not cease to be facts because their classification is impossible. We may rest this phase of the argument at this point, having in its defence all the broad analogies of nature and the history of peoples. It ought not to be a surprise, and it ought to be a relief, if we find it to be also the teaching of the Scriptures.

For many it would be of inestimable value to have some definite deliverance of Jesus Christ upon the question before us. Are all men immortal, or are only some? Is a universal resurrection a thing which he takes for granted, or is it not? An explicit *dictum* of his upon the subject would be to many of us an end of controversy. But it comes

as a sort of shock to be reminded, not only that he does not say, but that he avows, at the time when he spoke upon the general subject, that his information was limited. "Of that day and hour no man knoweth, not even the Son". It is not impossible, however, to ascertain at least in general, what his belief was. In the first place we have a sufficiently full report in the Gospels of what he actually said. It is true that the report is incomplete and fragmentary, but it is coherent. Then we have in the other portions of the New Testament the interpretation and expansion of his teaching by very intelligent and sympathetic contemporaries. Finally, and chiefly, we have his own extraordinary career. This last will constitute a portion by itself; for the present we ask the limited question,—What did Jesus, during the period before his "resurrection", believe and teach touching the future life?

The fact that his language was intelligible to those who heard him is proof that his general presumptions were the same as theirs. But it is the simple fact that they were not believers in "the immortality of the soul". If a previous belief in inherent immortality had been needful to enable them to understand his farther teaching in the premises, then he would have been obliged to say so. The point is that he took for his premises the beliefs which his hearers actually entertained. It is at once most necessary and most difficult to bring ourselves to realize that his hearers did not have at all the be-

liefs which are taken for granted now. Some of them did not believe in any future life at all. Some of them believed in corporate immortality for the people Israel, with which individual continuance had nothing to do. Some of them believed in the resurrection of those of the race of Abraham alone. Some looked for the immortality of only the righteous of that race. But nobody believed in the immortality of every human being as such. It is clear, therefore, that when he faces a company of this sort, if what he was about to teach was dependent for its validity, upon that belief which is now common, the presumption of universal future life, he must have said so. But he did not say so. Moreover, the assumptions now current would not have availed him at all. One of the most difficult things is to read the true meaning into a word or phrase to which one has long been in the habit of attaching a mistaken or secondary meaning. When we find Jesus using such antitheses as " life and death ", " eternal life and destruction ", " living and perishing ", it is at least probable that he used the words in their natural and obvious sense. But we have for so long been accustomed to think of eternal *life* as being equivalent to eternal happiness, and the converse, that it will require a strenuous and continued effort to see in Jesus' words what they meant and what alone they could have meant to those who heard them. Another thing to bear in mind is that he never deals in abstractions. He has nothing to say about " man," but only about men. He never

refers to "the soul" or "the human soul". He never discusses the question of immortality in the abstract, but only the possibilities and destinies of individuals. He never assumes that man is mortal, or immortal, he only points out to the individual which way life lies, and which way destruction. And what is possibly more important for our purpose than anything else, he plainly declares that many will be constitutionally incapable of understanding him at all. In other words, he announces that he speaks to those whose spiritual faculties are sufficiently developed to respond to the stimulus of the truth. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear".

Bearing these preliminary considerations in mind we may now ask,—What did he say? His teaching may be divided into two portions which differ greatly in form, if not in contents. The most prominent, but least clear, is that extended address in apocalyptic form, suggested by his disciples' inquiry concerning the fate of Jerusalem. The great difficulty in the way of determining his precise meaning here is the fact that the form of the address is evidently not his own. It is framed in that cryptic manner common to all the later apocalypses, and is derived from the earlier prophetic style.[1] Dr. Gould in his "Theology of the New Testament" well says of it, "Simple as are these teachings, Jesus has been the subject of the most serious misunderstandings

[1] Cf. Is. 13:9, 10; 24:21-23; Ezek. 32:7-10; Joel 2:10; Dan. 7:13.

from the beginning. The last things of which he speaks are not the end of the world, but of the age. Whatever was predicted here by our Lord was to take place within the generation succeeding his death. There is a consensus of scholars about this, the only question being whether or not he made a mistake. And it is strongly against the assumption that he did make a mistake, that he sets forth in the parables a statement of the slow growth of the Kingdom which clearly contradicts the idea of an early coming". In any case, and whatever it may purport, the last apocalypse of Jesus is so dramatic in form and imagery that not much can be learned from it as to the essential nature and possibilities of the individual man. This must be sought from his more definite teaching.

When one weaves together the words of Jesus as they are scattered through the Gospels, he finds that he has before him a biological treatise. He finds the conditions set forth upon which continuance in being is possible, the perils to which being is exposed, the means to counteract these perils, and the ultimate issues of living. But he finds also that the theme throughout is the life itself. The alternatives set forth are not future pleasure and future pain, but living or ceasing to live. The Gospels are biological altogether. They speak a language more intelligible to-day than it ever was before. The imagery is drawn almost exclusively from the processes and phenomena of life. The

reason is evident; the illustrations are determined by the theme. The question is not of rewards and penalties, but of living or perishing. Whatever of pleasure or pain is implicated is incidental. He begins by stating the case in terms which every biologist knows to be true of life at every stage, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth into life, and few there be that find it". Of fifty seeds oft nature brings but one to bear. "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not pass on to destruction, but hath passed out of death into life. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not, therefore, that I say unto you that except a man be born from above he cannot enter into the kingdom of God". The place of any creature is determined by its actions, for "every plant is classified by the fruits it bears. Men do not gather grapes from the acanthus nor figs from brambles. A good plant cannot produce bad fruit, nor an evil plant good fruit. But every plant that does not bring forth good fruit is cut to pieces and thrown in the fire". The spiritual life follows the analogy of the natural life both in origin and method. "For as the Father quickeneth the dead and maketh them living, so the Son quickeneth whom he will. He that hearkeneth

unto my word, and hath confidence in him that sent me, hath æonian life and moveth not to destruction, but hath passed out of the dead into the living. I declare unto you that if a man keep my saying he shall never see death. Leave the dead to bury their dead, and follow after me". He insists that this higher and more enduring life ought to be achieved at any cost. "For what will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and fall short (ζημιοω) of his soul? Or what shall a man get in exchange for his soul? If thy right eye or thy right hand should be in the way, pluck it out, cut it off, for it is better that one of thy members should perish than that thy whole body should be thrown away".

These quotations should suffice to show his teaching. All the others are variations upon the same theme. He makes his appeal to the instinct of living. If you do thus and thus, following in my steps, you can secure for yourself a life so prepotent that what you call death cannot ruin it. Blessed are the meek, the pure in heart, the unselfish, for the new kingdom belongs to them. If you devote your energies to building up your lower life, you will lose everything, because it comes to an end, but if you disregard it in the interest of my eternal gospel of goodness, you will find an æonian life. What is all this but the annunciation of the last term in the long series of organic evolution. And is it not supremely trustworthy as being the dictum of "the Man most man"?

No doubt the question will arise, If this is actually the teaching of Jesus, how comes it that he has been so long and so persistently misconceived? If the teaching of Jesus was biological, how has it come to be thought of as legal? If his distinction was between a perishable and an abiding life under conditions now existing, why has it been construed to refer to the contrast between happiness and agony in a future life, to which all men are destined in any case. It may be replied that, at any rate, he was not misunderstood by his Apostles and earliest interpreters.

THE FIRST TO CROSS

"Sleep'st thou indeed? or is Thy spirit fled
At large among the dead?
Whether in Eden's bowers Thy welcome voice
Wake Abraham to rejoice,
Or in some drearier scene Thine eye controls
The thronging band of souls;
That, as Thy blood won earth, Thine agony
Might set the shadowy realm from sorrow free".

—KEBLE.

IX

THE FIRST TO CROSS

The earliest writings in which the name of Jesus appears were written from thirty to fifty years after his death. None of these are reasoned and formulated statements of belief. They consist chiefly of certain letters which have survived from the correspondence carried on between some of his followers. This correspondence is often of an intimate and personal character, sometimes it is letters written by a prominent man to a club or group of Christians, to be read by them and passed on to other groups. In such composition we cannot expect to find any very definite or precise statements of doctrine. They bear much the same relation to Christianity as do, for example, the familiar correspondence of Huxley and Gray and Darwin to the doctrine of Evolution. In such a case it is not so much what the writers say as what they take for granted that enables one to see their real position. With the exception of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse it may be assumed that the whole New Testament was written within fifty years after the death of Jesus. Now, the question is, do these writings take for granted the indestructibility of the soul, and

the natural immortality of all men? There is no doubt of the answer; they do not. Moreover, such an assumption makes their arguments in many cases unintelligible, and in not a few renders them worthless.

In general, it may be said without hesitation, the New Testament continues the same biological theme around which the teaching of Jesus revolved. Their arguments do not start, however, as his do, from the facts of being, but from the fact of his resurrection. But their assumptions are the same as his. The earliest of the books of the New Testament are two letters written by St. Paul to a little group of converts which he had made some years previously at Thessalonica. At the time when he wrote it was generally expected by the Christians that Jesus' plan was to reappear while his friends still lived, gather them out of the world, and then make an end of all things, to reconstruct the earth and open a new régime. They believed the fact of his resurrection, but they had not come to see the place of that fact in the economy of life. This expectation of the early end of the world colors all the earlier New Testament writings. It was a naïve error which only death and the passing of the years could correct. They felt that they had come individually into the possession of a life of such quality that it would endure, but they saw at the same time that they were growing old physically. It came to the knowledge of Paul that his Thessalonian con-

verts, whose expectation was the same as his own, were disturbed and perplexed because some of their number who with them had been waiting for the Lord's coming, had fallen asleep. Had they, in consequence, missed the immortality which they expected? Paul thereupon writes to reassure them. What he says and what he does not say are equally noteworthy. He has nothing to say to them about universal resurrection and immortality. He writes: "I would not have you to doubt concerning them that have fallen asleep, or that you should sorrow as do other people, who have no hope for the dead. For as we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring back with him them that have fallen asleep in him. I assure you, in God's truth, that we who may be alive at the Lord's coming, will not have any advantage over them that have fallen asleep. For the Lord shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and first the dead in Christ shall rise; and then we that are alive, together with them, shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air". He was still of the same opinion when he wrote the Thessalonians his second letter; but as the years went on, and the real significance of Jesus' resurrection came to be better comprehended, he came to think of the new life less and less in connection with any great cosmic cataclysm, and more and more as the manifestation of a supreme vital force which would continue to operate accord-

ing to its own laws to the end of the ages. His matured belief is expressed in that divine classic which for twenty centuries has been read by Christian charity over the dead bodies of saints and sinners alike, the fifteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians. It is a marvellous construction of faith, science, poetry, and high aspiration. But it concerns itself solely with the "dead in Christ". The "natural man" is left outside its conclusions in express terms. If any one question this, let him read it; but let him read it all. When he has read that "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall be made alive", let him read on, "but each in his own order, Christ the first fruits, then they that are Christ's; and that is the end". The drama is closed and the stage cleared before the "natural" man has any standing upon it.

"That which is natural comes first, then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthen; the second man is of heaven. As is the earthen, such are they also that are earthen; and as is the heavenly, such are they that are heavenly. As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. For I declare this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption".

I am well aware that all this may seem to some to be an unwarrantable attempt to read into St. Paul's words a meaning which they will not bear. I can only urge that this seems to me to be the obvious and natural meaning, and the only meaning

which those to whom the letter was written could have found in it. And this conviction is established by the fact that this meaning squares with the fundamental biological purpose of the Gospel of Christ. The quintessence of the matter is that life in its supreme phrase conforms to the law of life in all its stages. It is a thing to be achieved. At every step there are a thousand candidates who fail for every one who attains. Those who do attain remain in possession while they fulfil the conditions in the order where they are. Except a molecule of matter be born from above it cannot enter into life. Except the living animal be born from above it cannot become man. Except a man be born from above he cannot enter into the new kingdom. That is not first which is natural, but that which is spiritual.

The later books of the New Testament, such as the Revelation of St. John and the apocalyptic portion of the Gospel of Matthew, throw little direct light upon the subject. While it is true that they concern themselves with the "last things", it is also true that they wrote in a manner which was not intended to be taken for the face of it. The Apocalypse is obscure because it was meant to be obscure. The writers put in cryptogram things which it was not safe for Christians to discuss openly. No doubt it was intelligible to those to whom it was addressed, but the key has long since been lost. But it is probable that the book of Revelation, colored by the gorgeous but fine frenzied imaginations of Dante

and Milton, have done more than anything else to fix the popular notions concerning resurrection and the future life. The misfortune is that poetry has been mistaken for revelation and imagery for reality. But however firmly these Oriental pictures may be fixed in the popular mind, their reality has never been accepted as a part of the Christian faith. The Creed is content with saying that we "believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come". No public creed earlier than the fourth century contains the clause, "the resurrection of the body".

The dramatic framework in which all this is set in apocalyptic scripture may be helpful or may be confusing just in proportion as one is or is not able to discriminate between the truth and the imagery. No end of error has been caused by confusing the one with the other. From this has come that series of mental pictures of universal death; an underworld wherein all souls as phantoms wait through the ages; a spectacular Judgment; a procession of redeemed to Elysium, and of condemned to Tartarus. Unless one's thought can escape from out this Doré gallery altogether, it will seek in vain for a reasonable as well as religious and holy hope of life beyond.

If, however, this "way to immortality" be but the extension of the path of life which we may trace upward through nature, what specific and essential connection has it with Jesus of Nazareth?

Birds which are born and bred in subarctic regions must perish unless they become able, at the proper time, to cross land and sea to a summer clime. Whether one of them shall be able to do this, depends upon its growth of wing, its instinct of direction, and its strength to sustain flight. Between the one who can and the one who cannot is a difference of a few millimeters' length of pinion and a few grains, more or less, of nourishment. The transit for the individual man from the present stage of being to the one which lies beyond we believe to be a question of the vigor of moral personality. Is there any reason to believe that the passage has ever been effected? A single instance would be worth volumes of argument. It would bring the whole matter out of the abstract into the concrete. Moreover, it would transform the lives of all those to whom such information might come. If we could find one single case of a man having passed through corporeal death, and having thereafter shown to living man by word or sight or speech that he is the same one who died, it would revolutionize human life. Above all, if he should give an intelligible account, not of where he has gone to, but of how he got there, the riddle of the universe would be read. It would be as though some one had found a practicable ford across an encompassing river which had always been thought impassable. It would change the whole temper and manner of life of those who live this side. It would bring hope concerning the fate

of that multitude who had essayed the same crossing, and had seemed to have been drowned.

There are now living several hundred millions of people who believe such a crossing to have been made. They believe that it occurred two thousand years ago, sometime between a Friday evening and a Sunday morning, in the city of Jerusalem, and that the man's name was Jesus. I understand quite well how the scientific man and the student of evidences may feel like turning away with impatience at the mere suggestion. The event is so remote, the direct evidence so scanty, the event so incredible, that busy men cannot be expected to take it seriously. Maybe so. It is more than likely that a very moderate cross-examination would break down every witness, and would show contradiction in the testimony. But still the fact remains that millions of people have believed and do believe it to have been a real occurrence. These are also people whose average intelligence is, upon the whole, higher than that of any equal number of people in the world. No like number approach them in moral earnestness or in general truthfulness. If it be objected that their belief in the alleged reappearance of Jesus after his death is only an article of faith which they receive after they have on other grounds become Christians, then the question arises, What accounts for Christianity? The world in Jesus' time did not look for a future life of the individual; to-day it looks for it even more universally than the facts warrant.

What has caused the change? The cause is so evident that no student of history questions it. It is due to the assured conviction of friends of Jesus that they saw him in his own person after his death. It is conceivable that they were mistaken. But in that case we have that stupendous fabric which we call Christianity, that complex structure of morals, social order, political energy, and religious power, resting upon nothing. Now, there is such a thing as a credulity of scepticism as well as a credulity of faith. The sensible man tries to avoid both, to look at things as they are, and in any case to accept the explanation which best explains.

Let it be well understood right here that the question involved is not of the "supernatural" as opposed to the "natural". If Jesus survived his own death it was because it was natural for him and such as he to do so. The antithesis of natural and supernatural is a mere imagination. The only true classification is the real and the unreal. Whatever is real is natural, for whenever its reality is established the definition of nature must be extended to include it.

Assuming the story of the Gospels to be honest—and no one doubts the honesty—it is clear that between five hundred and a thousand of Jesus' friends who knew him in life believed that they had seen him again after his death. It must be acknowledged that the accounts are confused and in details contradictory, but in essentials they are clear enough.

The disciples were not looking for his reappearance, and were very slow to believe it when it occurred. They had thought this was he who should redeem Israel, but he had died, and their dream was at an end. Then *something happened*, suddenly, which changed the whole situation for them and in consequence changed their whole lives. What was it that did happen? The vulgar answer is,—the dead body of Jesus came to life again, and their senses convinced them of the fact. But this is not the impression which the story gives when it is candidly examined. It is very curious that in every case the person to whom Jesus reappeared failed at first to recognize him. This was true of the two Marys, of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, the company in the upper room, and of all. "When they saw him they worshipped, but some were sceptical". It is plain, however, that they had an experience of some kind which convinced them of his identity.

Now, assuming, as we must, that the story is an honest one, it is a passing strange one. If it were told of an ordinary man, we could only look at it a little for its curiosity, and then dismiss it. Two considerations, however, preclude us from dealing with it after this rough and ready fashion. The first is that it is related to the previous life of a personality which is altogether remarkable. The second is that it has wrought such momentous results in the course of human history. The story is the essential element of the Christian Gospel. Remov-

ing this eviscerates it. St Paul says plainly that if his Gospel should break down at this point it would be worthless. Even though Jesus might have lived and taught and suffered and died as he did, "if he be not risen again your faith is vain". His argument was that the man Jesus had definitely realized the process whereby a human being might attain to the possession of a psychical life so exalted in quality and so tenacious in substance that corporeal death could not break it down; that he had achieved this for himself at an incalculable cost; that he had passed through death and conquered it, "having shown himself alive by many infallible proofs"; and that he had become a kind of first fruits of a human harvest, which might be great or scanty as the event should prove. The primitive appeal of the Gospel was to the supreme aspiration of all organized creatures, the "lust of living". This appeal is incalculably more potent than the one now commonly addressed to the love of happiness or the fear of misery. It explains at once the eager welcome given to the Gospel in the early ages and the languid acceptance accorded to it now. No wonder Paul accounted all things "but dung that he might know Christ and the power of his resurrection and attain unto the resurrection of the dead". And little wonder that men to-day who have fallen into the way of thinking that they are immortal anyway, will snatch at the pleasures of the life that now is, and trust to good fortune to escape any very

intolerable misery in that which is to come. But if it be true that the stake at issue is not either the pleasure or the pain of life, but life itself, the situation becomes more tragic.

At this point we come to face a very obstinate difficulty. In the continent of human history Christianity occupies but an insignificant space. It covers but two score out of the centuries of human progression. Those who ever did or ever could have heard of our Master are but an infinitesimal fraction of that mighty host of human beings who have appeared upon and passed off the world's stage. A means of attaining immortality, therefore, which could only be available after a certain date A. U. C., and within a certain geographical area, could be only a mockery. It would be like a zoology whose laws would only hold within a thiergarten and be inapplicable to the beasts of the field. It would be little to call such a doctrine absurd, when we might justly characterize it as profoundly immoral. We are in search of a bridge by which it may be possible for individuals to pass from this present life to another. Common equity demands that the hither end of the bridge should be placed within the reach of the first man who could walk and who wished to cross. We cannot worthily imagine that the great Architect should either have postponed its construction until countless generations should have perished on this side the flood, or that he should have placed it where it would be only available for an elect few.

Let the conditions of eternal life be as inexorable as they may prove to be. We are familiar with that necessity at every stage of the organic movement. No one will gainsay a rigid selection of the individuals who live out of the multitudes who perish. But the one thing which the moral sense demands is that this selection shall be a natural and not an arbitrary one. Time was when devout men denounced the phrase "natural selection" because they fancied it circumscribed the action of God's intelligence. They did not realize the unspeakable relief it brings to a belief in God's righteousness. Even the gift of eternal life might scarcely be accepted at his hands if it came tainted with favoritism. "Whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive", may serve as the conception of God's character current at the court of Belshazzar, but the moral sense of to-day can only conceive thus of Baal.

But are we not bound to hold that "there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby they may be saved but the name of the anointed Jesus"? No doubt; but this fact has wide implications which are seldom realized. If eternal life be in any actual way correlated with the Divine Man whom we adore, it must be in some way superior to times and dates and missionaries. If the Christ be the Son of Man to any effectual purpose, it can only be because he represents some force which is available under the same conditions to all men at all times. The "Life of the World" must be able

and ready to flow at any time and place where a physical organism is ready to receive it. The Divinity of Christ is an infinitely larger thing than the theologians know. Their schemes of "atonement" give us little or no help. They are all hopelessly artificial and unreal. They all attempt to state the function of the Christ in terms of Hebrew sacrifice and Roman law. One could as well construct a zoology in the same terms. Christian thought has been bewildered and Christian instinct wellnigh defeated by the centuries of logically coherent but empty systems of doctrine concerning the work of Christ. His terms are biological; theirs are legal. It may be ages yet before we recover from the misfortune of having had the truth of Christ interpreted and fixed by jurists and logicians instead of by naturalists and men of science. It is much as though the rationale of the circulation of the blood had been described by Sir Matthew Hale, or the germ theory of disease interpreted by Blackstone, or the doctrine of evolution formulated by a legislative council. Religious thought is everywhere striving to escape from the dreary fortress of law to the open world of nature. I venture to think that Darwin and the martyrs of science have done more to make the words of Christ intelligible than have Athanasius and the theologians. It is little less than marvellous, the way in which the words of Jesus fit in with the forms of thought which are to-day current. They are life, generation, survival of the fit,

tree and fruit, multiplication by cell growth as leaven, operation by chemical contact as salt, dying of the lonely seed to produce much fruit, imposition of a higher form of life upon a lower by being born from above, grafting a new scion upon a wild stock, the phenomena of plant growth from the seed through the blade and the ear to the matured grain, and, finally, the attainment of an individual life which is eternal. The claim made for the Son of Man is that he has to do with this vital process in a vital fashion from the beginning of the ages to the end of them. This claim may or may not be more difficult for thoughtful men to admit than the claim that he wrought out a means of legal escape for a chosen few from a judicial sentence. But whatever difficulty does attach to it is an intellectual and not an ethical one.

BODIES CELESTIAL

"The great significance of the individual man fairly raises the presumption that his place in Nature has a meaning that is not to be measured by the length of his life in the body. Looking, as we must do, for a purpose that justifies to our understanding all this doing of Nature, is it not reasonable to suppose that one at least of these purposes is attained in the creation of these personalities? And may we not fairly regard these persons as containing and preserving the permanent gain which comes from the work of the visible universe"?—SHALER, "The Individual".

X

BODIES CELESTIAL

So far as we can see, a living personality without a body is impossible; a "disembodied spirit" is unthinkable. This is why the question of the "resurrection of the dead" becomes of such supreme importance. The contribution which Christianity has made to belief in a future life is bound up with material quite as much as spiritual phenomena. People had for ages before Christ a notion of some kind of a nebulous and phantasmal survival of the personality, but the belief was at its best practically inoperative. A spirit with no material organ for expressing itself puts to confusion all our conceptions of what a human being is. The body is just as essential a component part of our idea of a man as the soul is. It is just as easy to think of the body becoming immortal without a soul as of the soul being immortal without a body. This is why the physiologist finds it so difficult to believe in the immortality of the soul. It is only because he sees more clearly than other men do the constant and essential interdependence of soul and body. The ground of his scepticism is sound. There is no known form of energy separate from matter. The

soul cannot flit across the river naked. Nor is it any relief to think of it as existing even temporarily in a quiescent state while waiting for a resurrected body. It cannot wait. An individual life must be continuous or else not be at all. It cannot stop and go on again. The Easter images of the egg and the butterfly will not bear examination. The caterpillar, the imago, and the butterfly are all included in one cycle, to be sure, but the continuity of the individual is broken at each stage of the progression, and the cycle when completed returns upon itself. It goes nowhere. What we are in search of is a continuous life of the individual. To this end St. Paul affirms that there *is* a natural body and there *is* a spiritual body. If so, where is it? How does it grow? What are its qualities? What is its relation to what we call matter? What reason has the Apostle for making his assertion? His reason is obvious; he asserts that there is a "spiritual" body because he has seen one.

The nature of Jesus' reappearance may be examined without irreverence because we are so deeply concerned to know the facts and their significance. The Gospels represent the risen Christ as a living man like other men, and at the same time strangely unlike, and they make no attempt to adjust the contradiction. He is independent of the laws of matter, and at the same time he conforms to some of them. He suddenly appears in a lighted room whose doors remain locked, but at the same time they think

they see him eat and drink. Again, he communicates with them by means of some kind of spoken language, but at the same time is invisible. They see him and take him for a stranger, but the next moment they recognize him. We seem, in a word, to be in the presence of something which is both material and immaterial, something which is cognizable by the senses, and which at the same time plays fast and loose with sense perceptions. There would seem to be only two reasonable attitudes toward the story open to us. Either we may dismiss it as an Oriental fantasy, or we must extend our definitions of nature to include its phenomena. Of course one may, if he so please, look at it from a distance as a sacred region into which curiosity dare not enter and where faith alone is admissible. But there is such a thing as sitting down at the entrance of a holy ground under pretence of putting off one's shoes, while the real motive is indolence or fear. If the phenomena under consideration are facts at all, they are facts which are meant for use. We may rightly "have boldness to enter into the holiest, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say his flesh".

The most significant feat which modern science has accomplished has been to establish the existence of that strange substance known as interstellar *ether*. Its existence had long been suspected, now it is known. Sir Isaac Newton closes his "Principia" with this prophetic paragraph:—

"And now we might add something concerning a most subtle spirit which pervades and lies hid in all gross bodies; by the force and attraction of which spirit the particles of bodies mutually attract one another, and electric bodies separate, and light is emitted, and all sensation is excited, and the members of animal bodies move at the command of the will by vibrations of this spirit propagated along the solid filaments of the nerves. But these things cannot be explained in a few words, nor are we furnished with that sufficiency of experiments necessary to an accurate determination and demonstration of the laws by which this subtle spirit operates".

Now, this "subtle spirit" of Sir Isaac has been shown to be not spirit at all, but a material medium which fills all space and interpenetrates all matter. The result has rendered necessary a new definition of Matter. Extension, ponderability, form, dimension, and such qualities are no longer sufficient to define it. "Empty" space can no longer be spoken of, for no portion of space is empty. It can no longer be said that "no two portions of matter can occupy the same space at the same time". Indeed, it seems to be the very condition of existence of the matter which we see that it should lie bathed in a matter which we do not see. For this universal ether is matter. It shows some of the properties of a most tenuous fluid, in other respects it acts as an infinitely dense solid, and in still others as jelly. It is the material medium through which light, electricity, and radiant energy are conducted by waves of differing length, and probably what we call gravitation also. Its waves flow through the densest

material known like water through a sieve. It appears, indeed, to be the instrument in and through which all the elemental forces, light, heat, electricity, chemical energy, do their work. May not vital energy be concerned with it as well?

It is not easy to understand why the physicists are so reluctant to admit the objective existence of such a force as "Vital Energy". Surely there are abundant phenomena which cannot be classified under any other form of energy known. Allowing that the phrase is only a name for a set of phenomena whose essential nature is not understood, that much may also be said of all the other categories of energy.

Each thought we think, each emotion we feel, is associated with molecular changes and rearrangements in the brain. But this material fabric of thought is every moment disintegrating, and at death falls into ruin. Now, suppose that before that ruin befalls, the soul shall have been able to build up of some more enduring substance, as it were, a brain within the brain, a body within the body, something like that which the Orientals have for ages spoken of as the Astral Body. Then, when the body of flesh shall be laid aside, there would remain a body, material to be sure, but compacted of a kind of matter which behaves quite differently from that which our sense perceptions deal with. It is a material which, so far as science has anything to say, is essentially indestructible. It moves freely amongst and through ordinary matter without let

or hindrance. One can at any rate picture to himself a life of this Ethereal sort. From the individual spirits of just men made perfect this present "muddy vesture of decay" has fallen away, leaving them "not unclothed but clothed upon". They are still men. They have rational souls with material bodies fit to sustain and to express their psychical life. The matter of their bodies is obedient to the laws of matter and life, but to the laws of *that kind* of life and matter. There are celestial bodies, and there are bodies terrestrial, and each has its own mode of action. Such Ethereal bodies compacted with living souls would of necessity inhabit a universe of their own, even though that universe should occupy the same space that this one does. Neither earth nor fire nor water could impede their movement. In frost and flame they would be equally at home. With the swiftness of light or gravitation they would speed from where old Böotes leads his leash to where Sagitarius draws his bow in the south. With bodies of such fine stuff compounded, and so plastic to the uses of the spirit, their knowledge would expand until Nature's secrets should lie open to their eyes. Their senses would be so acute and so delicately balanced as to be capable of thrills of pleasure so transcendent and of pain so poignant, that the experiences of this life give no measure to estimate them by. Love could have its perfect way where there would be perfect comprehension. In this present stage no personality ever knows very

much of any other. Each is shut within a body which at best can only partially reveal it. And the mind is continually weighed down and retarded by the thousand ills that flesh is heir to. No doubt the Ethereal body is subject to its own ills. But with it as the vehicle for their expression, love and knowledge must have opened to them possibilities, not infinite indeed, but so extended that we may not even try to guess their limits.

All this is based upon two premises, first, that any possible future life must be an embodied life; and, second, that there exists such a material stuff as may serve the uses and needs of such a life. It is an hypothesis. But every advancing step of knowledge is gained by an hypothesis. If the theory be found to bring into coherence facts which are known to be facts, and make them coherent and intelligible, and lead to the discovery of still other facts, it slowly changes from an hypothesis to a conviction. Will this one bear that test?

Let us see first to what extent it fits the language of the New Testament.

"For we know that if the earthen fabric of our tent be dissolved, we have a building from God, a fabric not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For truly in this we groan being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up in life. We faint not, but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. All flesh is not the same flesh, there is one flesh of men, another of beasts, another of birds, so there are celestial bodies and

bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. The first man is of the earth, earthen, the second man is of heaven. As we have borne the image of the earthy we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain with us until now. And not only so, but we ourselves which have the first fruit of the spirit groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, that is to say, the setting free of the body". "And Jesus was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light, and behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him". "And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them he took bread and blessed and brake it, and their eyes were opened and they knew him, and he slowly disappeared from their sight". "I know a man in Christ, whether in the body or out of the body I know not, caught up into paradise, and he heard things of which it is not possible for a man to speak". "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of Jesus Christ".

Such quotations might be extended indefinitely, but these are enough to show that the companions and survivors of Jesus looked with confidence for a future life of such sort that their spirits would not be left naked, but clothed upon with some kind of material substance which was even then being woven for them in the secret place of their own being. Whether or not the Ethereal stuff which science now knows does or does not prove to be that which may serve as the physical basis of a continued personal

life, it may fairly be said that it enables us to conceive of such a life, and that is much. The late Professor Cope in his "Origin of the Fittest" asks, "Is there any generalized form of matter diffused through the universe which could then sustain consciousness?" and answers, "The presumption is that such a form of matter may well exist."

According to this view the putting on of immortality is in no wise the passage from a material to a spiritual state. It is the passage from one kind of a materially conditioned state to another. In this is where its strength lies. It turns away from that unthinkable region of disembodied spirit. We shrink from disembodied being with a repugnance which cannot be overcome by any argument. Much as we may yearn for immortality, we would rather miss it than possess it under conditions of which we can form no conception and which terrify by their strangeness.

The late Professor Shaler, Dean of the Scientific Faculty of Harvard, says, "A number of men of no mean authority as naturalists, some of them well trained in experimental science, have after long and apparently careful inquiry, become convinced that there is evidence of the survival of some after death". This is a conclusion which sensible men will reach very hesitatingly. The evidence, if evidence it can be called, is found by an analysis of that enormous but unsavory mass of Spiritism, Occultism, Telepathy, Hypnotism, and such like. It is a material with which

sane men are reluctant to deal. It is so contaminated with fraud, charlatanism, credulity, and hysterics that one's natural inclination is to pass by it as far on the other side of the way as the width of the road will allow. But at the same time it must be allowed that there is a growing willingness to admit that there is "something in it". It is not easy to find even an educated man who will categorically deny that there are instances wherein one personality communicates with another without physical media of intercourse. At any rate the belief in hypnotic suggestion and telepathic communication has come to be quite general. The proof is very difficult to come at. When one arises from reading the reports of the Society for Psychical Research or the experiments of the physical psychologists he is apt to find himself in a very exasperating mental state. He has the feeling that he is here in the presence of some kind of natural phenomena which are real but which are being exploited by the wrong people. He is not much better satisfied when he finishes the report of a Seybert Commission of lawyers and scientists appointed by a great university to investigate the alleged facts. If the one set is too credulous, the other is too dogmatic.

The truth would seem to be that we are beginning to take serious account of a set of unclassified psychical phenomena which correspond very closely with a newly described set of physical phenomena. The unthinking person is prone to regard such things

as the X-Ray and wireless telegraphy and radiant energy as only inventions or discoveries which are only a little more wonderful, but not differing in kind from a thousand others which have gone before. This misapprehends their significance. They are phenomena in an entirely new region; doors opened into a new universe. It is a material universe, to be sure, and one which we see now to have been always about us. Its existence had long been suspected, but there was no proof, and there did not seem to be any organ or faculty by which proof could be made. It is a universe where the ordinary laws of matter are inoperative, indeed appear to be nonexistent, but of its reality no one thinks of doubting. Now, coinciding with these new and strange discoveries in the physical sphere there appear to be equally strange phenomena in the psychical sphere. Is it unreasonable to believe that the two are in some way correlated? That living mind can and does, under certain conditions, act upon other living minds without the medium of matter can hardly any longer be doubted. Whether it be a "departed" spirit touching a living one, or one living one touching another, seems to me to be of very little consequence. The one is antecedently just as probable or as improbable as the other. But so far all indications point to the belief that such equivocal phenomena have their place in a region which is not spiritual in the sense in which that term is generally used, but in one which is material, though not in the sense

which that word ordinarily connotes. In a word, the last discovery in physics and the last experiment in psychology appear to function in the same region.

The way in which all this concerns our theory of another life ought now to be evident. If that life be one which involves and requires a material basis, and demands it at a time when the matter which ordinarily serves the spirit for its expression shall not be available, it is much to be even thus tentatively convinced that spirit can function under other conditions than those which belong to the ordinary life of man. It gives point and direction to ancient and widespread, but vague and unfruitful, hopes and beliefs. As Professor Shaler judiciously says:—

"Notwithstanding this disinclination to meddle or be muddled by the problems of spiritism, the men of science have a natural interest in the inquiries of the few true observers who are dredging in that dirty sea. Trusting to the evident scientific faithfulness of these hardy explorers, it appears evident that they have brought up from that deep certain facts which, though still shadowed by doubt, indicate the persistence of the individual consciousness after death. It has, moreover, to be confessed that these few as yet imperfect observations are fortified by the fact that through all the ages of his contact with nature man has firmly held to the notion that the world was peopled with disembodied individualities which could appeal to his own intelligence. Such a conviction is worth something, though it be little. Supported by any critical evidence it becomes of much value. Thus we may fairly conjecture that we may be on the verge of something like a demonstration that the individual consciousness does survive the death of the body by which it was nurtured".[1]

[1] "The Individual".

THE MORAL EFFECT

" It is certainly hard to see how hope can be based on an external power brought to bear on man's nature, forcing it into a line of action with which it has no affinity. This conception of compulsory goodness has nothing in common with the Biblical view of man's relation to divine influence. The power of Christianity lies not in the fear of hell, or even in the hope of any heaven ".—Bruce, " The Moral Order of the World ".

XI

THE MORAL EFFECT

THERE is a practical question which we may consider now. No moral or religious belief can be adopted or rejected without some regard to the effect which it may reasonably be expected to produce upon the conduct of those who entertain it. How will the doctrine of immortability as distinguished from immortality affect men's moral life? If we say to them,—"You are not naturally immortal, but you may become so if you set about it properly", and if they believe us, will they be the better or the worse for it? Of course the intrinsic truth of the doctrine does not depend upon such a consideration. That must stand or fall on other grounds. If it be true men must adjust themselves to it as best they may. Truth is neither made or unmade by an estimate of its consequences. But at the same time, when one is endeavoring to determine whether or not such a proposition be true, he cannot but be influenced by his judgment of its practical result.

It is quite commonly taken for granted that a general belief in the necessary immortality of all men, with the proffer of an eternal heaven and the threat of an eternal hell, is essential to the moral order of

society. It is unquestionable that this common belief has been a powerful deterrent from evil at some times and within certain limited areas. It operated thus in Europe during the Middle Ages, and it does so to some extent in the territory of Islam to-day. But all will agree that the righteousness thus evoked is of a very unsatisfactory quality.

> "The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
> To haud the wretch in order".

It has never succeeded in being more than that. Reward and penalty have been exploited to the utmost for moral purposes. The joys of heaven have been painted in forms most alluring and colors most ravishing; the picture of hell with its lurid torments has been drawn by the hands of the world's most transcendent geniuses. But the result has always been amazingly meagre in its effect upon men's conduct. While it has fired a few with an ecstatic longing and overwhelmed a few in a deadly terror, the great multitude, even while they assent to the truth of the doctrine, live as though it were non-existent. In our time it may well be doubted whether its effect is appreciable. It is generally allowed even by the most orthodox that the exploitation of a "material" hell and a "material" heaven has been a mistake. But they do not appear to notice that when the "material" element is eliminated from the idea nothing is left of it. If it is not material it is nothing. Its practical effect, where it has had

any, has been due to the way in which it allured or frightened the imagination. But to do this it must be presented in forms with which the imagination can deal. If its form be lacking its substance is gone. The attempt to substitute purely spiritual pleasures and spiritual pains for the crude glories of heaven and horrors of hell must always be unsuccessful. In point of fact the whole presentation of future reward and penalty has ceased to move. The awards and the sentences are felt to be irrelevant. The whole scheme is mechanical and artificial. It rests upon presumptions which are so unreasonable and inequitable that advance in intelligence and moral clarity renders them intolerable. The classification of "righteous" and "wicked" is the merest figment—no objective fact corresponds to it. If it be assumed that every man, without regard to his stage of moral development, passes on into another life which is endless by its very nature, the sense of fair dealing demands that he should be left unclassified and undoomed until he has reached the end of his line of moral progress. This is indeed the explicit teaching of Jesus as to those who are capable of passing on at all. The wheat and the tares grow together until the end of the æon. But this natural process of life, growth, and development culminating in stable being or in disintegration, has nothing in common with the scheme of probation, trial, judgment, acquittal, and sentence. It is the plain fact that whenever the belief becomes current that a future life of

some sort is assured for all in any event, men will conclude to wait till that life is reached before beginning any very strenuous effort to determine its character.

If, on the other hand, we follow the teaching of Christ and of Nature, we find a moral dynamic which is quite incalculable, and from which there is no escape. Compared with its dire exhibition of destruction following in the path of moral offence, the threat of hell is but the rattling of a medicine man's gourd. Let a man once see that the alternative which confronts him at every step of his moral progression is life or death, that his task is, as Christ says, to "win for himself a soul", or at a farther stage, to "save his soul alive", and he will realize that he is face to face with realities and not with an extraneous arrangement arbitrarily established. The appeal is to that deepest, strongest, most persistent of all desires, the love of life. "Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life". Once moral self-consciousness has been reached by the individual, his instinct of self-preservation may confidently be depended upon to induce strenuous action to protect himself from death, unless he be misled by some outside assurance that death is not for him a possible issue.

It may well be that suicide is possible for a human soul at every stage of its history, here or yonder. Indeed, it is not easy to conceive the possibility of a conscious personality being kept alive against its

own determination to make an end of itself. Such a condition of existence would seem to contradict the very idea of personality. It may be that God is no more able to force a man to live than to force him to love. There are places where coercion defeats itself. Certainly it is true now that every man holds in his hand the power to slay himself if he will. One wonders sometimes why the power is not more frequently used. Hamlet was mistaken in his explanation,—'tis not "the dread of something after death which makes us rather bear the ills we have than fly to others we know not of". 'Tis not because "resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought". The resolve upon self-destruction is reached more reluctantly by the brutal savage who has no thought of anything beyond than it is by the educated man whose imagination is crowded with pictures of post-obituary horrors. The elemental instinct of living may be trusted to keep one from making his own quietus, wherever he may be. The horror of ceasing to be is a far more powerful emotion than the fear of damnation. If fear be needed at all, or be efficacious at all, to the evocation of goodness, here is a form of disaster compared to which the fear of hell is but a bogie to frighten children.

The continuance of any individual in being is dependent upon his conforming to the conditions of life at the stage where he is. St. Paul has set out in a most precise statement what are the laws for

the kind of beings which most of us at any rate have come to be. When one has reached that point of moral progress which he describes by the phrase, "being in Christ Jesus", he has passed out from under the lower law binding upon creatures who have not reached so far. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the spirit is life. The mind of the flesh is not subject to this higher law of God, indeed it cannot be. But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, provided that the spirit of God inhabiteth you. *If* the spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead be in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through the spirit that dwelleth in you. So then, brethren, we are under obligation not to the flesh to live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh ye are bound to die; but if by the spirit ye mortify the flesh ye shall live".

This is the key to the marvellous welcome with which the world hailed the "Good news of the Gospel of the resurrection"; to the languid indifference with which the gospel of escape from hell is received today; to the new enthusiasm for righteousness which might be expected to burst forth once more if men were brought to see that holiness is the very path to abiding life.

THE NEW CREATION

" Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Do not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched
But to fine issues ".

—"Measure for Measure ".

XII

THE NEW CREATION

The word "Christian" is really one of the most vague and ill-defined terms in common use. The definitions of it which have been made are as a rule either so confused as to be valueless, or so precise as to be untrue. Is the "Christian" simply one who is "better" than his neighbors? Or is he one who has been admitted to membership in the Organization by the initiatory sacrament? Or is he one who has passed through some special phase of emotional experience? The reply is, All these definitions are irrelevant. They are like attempts to express a chemical compound in feet and inches, to describe a polyp or a marsupial in musical notation, to measure a mother's grief by a chemical analysis of her tears, to define a human child in terms of geometry. The fact exists in one realm; the definitions are drawn from another. If, however, we replace the whole matter in the region where it belongs, the perplexity disappears.

The practical evil of this confusion is incalculable. With the best will possible, men do not know how to set about the matter. Their conduct in the sphere of religion shows a strange lack of purpose

and plan. In other things men know what they want, what they are trying to do; here they are vague and, as a consequence, ineffective. Many leave it alone altogether on this very account. It is probably the case that religion occupies a far smaller space in everyday life within Christendom than it does in heathen men's lives. The Mohammedan or the Hindoo allows to it a far larger measure of activity. This is not because he is more religious than we, but because religion is for him far more clearly defined. His course of action is clear, and is followed because it is clear. Among us it is not so. Multitudes are kept away from Christianity a thousand times more by its apparent elusiveness than by its moral exactions or its mystery. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life"? is the eternal cry of the earnest soul. But to this eager inquiry there is no answer forthcoming which he sees how to act upon. Jesus' answer seems to have been strangely lost sight of. What that is we will have to examine again. But in its absence what we see all about us is a curious indefiniteness of aim in religious movement. It is not at all "inconsistency", that is, failure of correspondence between profession and practice. It is action which is without definite purpose, movement which goes nowhere. The practical man either leaves it aside altogether, or he commits himself to a mechanical ecclesiasticism, or he trusts to an unethical revivalism. He thinks of religion as submission to a code, or as subscrip-

tion to a creed, or as an emotional experience, or as some combination of all three.

Jesus presents it as the life which is characteristic of a "Kingdom". Now, a kingdom, in nature, is a very complex and mysterious thing, but its phenomena are unmistakable. Let us take, for example, the Animal Kingdom. Its frontiers are not sharply defined. Between it and the Vegetable Kingdom next below there is a debatable land, how extended no man knows. There are a myriad forms of life, as yet too little developed to allow one to say which kingdom contains them. This kingdom contains within its borders forms as widely unlike in manner and experience as the Amœba and the Man, together with all forms between. The quality which all the forms possess in common is that thing which we call animal life. It has a thousand methods of generation, but the thing generated is always of the same kind,—a living, animal form. Its most highly organized product is Man. But within that form there is also immeasurable diversity,—from the individual hardly distinguishable from the brute, to the man a little lower than the angels. The Christian *Principia* is that the germs of a higher type of life lie latent in Humanity; they develop after a law of their own; that Christ is organically connected with this process of development; and that the new creature is the Christian. Is it possible then to recognize this new creature when he appears?

There is one significant fact which the naturalist has learned in studying the evolution of species. That is, a new form does not take its start from the summit of the form next below it. The divergent path which issues in a higher being takes its departure at a point far below that place. The line of evolution, for example, which culminates in Man, when traced backward is found to intersect the trunk of the tree of life at a place much below that where the Simian lives. By analogy, therefore, we may not look for the beginnings of the "new life" at the top of human attainment. It must be sought for among meek and lowly beginnings. We may expect it to be present at a stage where the intelligence is but little developed, where all human powers and faculties are relatively low. "For not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty are chosen, but God hath chosen the foolish and the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are strong". And Jesus announces that "God hath hid these things from the wise and understanding, and hath revealed them unto babes".

Whatever "that manner of life which was also in Jesus Christ" may prove to be, we may expect to find it compatible with a modest degree of intellectual development. To identify the "Christian" we must look not only for a higher life than that which Humanity has already exhibited, but for a different type of life. The disciples of Jesus were not "better" men than their contemporaries; they had be-

come a different kind of men. They probably compared but illy with Seneca or Marcus Aurelius or "the sweet Gallio". They were men of limited intelligence and faulty character. This feature is strikingly true of Christianity so far as its history is contained within the New Testament. St. Paul addresses his converts as "saints", "new creatures", and in the same breath rebukes them for flagrant moral lapses. He regrets that they are but new-born babes of the new order, and can only be fed with milk and not strong meat. All that the new life demands is a human personality developed far enough to make its beginning possible.

The New Life attaches itself to human nature at the point where the moral sense emerges into self-consciousness. In its essence it is *un-self-ishness*. In the natural man the soul is divided between the "will to live" and the "will to love". Led by the one he strives continually to conquer all things to his own ends. He looks toward himself, and must ultimately be defeated and perish because the universe is hostile, and is too strong for him. Led by the other he emerges from himself, becomes at home in the universe, and akin to God. The first self-consciousness of this kinship is the "new birth". Like all new-born things it is feeble, and its motions are reflexive rather than voluntary, but it has been born. It feels outward with hesitating fingers, not to clutch the universe, but to caress it. But, it will be asked, Is not this true of every one? I reply, no,

not every man. Until this stage is reached love is lust, the power to possess and enjoy. If it be asked, Does any man do it, I reply, Yes, the New Man does, and this is the test by which he is identified. The classic statement of the doctrine is in the First Epistle of St. John. No more profound utterance is extant in philosophy or biology:—

"The Word of life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness unto you the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. That which ye have seen and heard we declare unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with the Father and with his son Jesus the Christ. For Love is of God, and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God. And the witness is this, that God gave unto us the eternal life, and this life is in his son. He that hath the son hath life and he that hath not the son hath not life. These things have I written that ye may know that ye have eternal life".

The "Christian", then, is the human being who is identified by his peculiar habit, viz., his *will to live* being subordinated to his *will to love*. This sets him in a new relation to both the spiritual and the physical universe.

But if this is the case, were there not Christians long before Christ, and in regions where no word of him has ever reached? Undoubtedly. The place of Christ in the New Order is not the beginning of a series but the centre of a circle. From Galilee he moves outward in every direction, not only in space, but in time as well. The "Divinity of

Christ" is a far larger thing than even Orthodoxy realizes. If eternal life be correlated organically with the Son of Man whom we adore, it must be in some way which is superior to times and dates, and which is not contingent upon missionaries. We may not present him as eternal, and at the same time as fixed within history and geography. The New Man must have appeared in the upward progress of humanity at a date long before God's experiment with human living in the time of Tiberius Cæsar. We may not allow the need of theological coherence to shut the doors of the Kingdom against "Noah, Daniel, and Job", or their kind of any kin. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not the God of the dead but the living. Christianity means that whoever, anywhere, or at any time, has attained to a spiritual life which manifests certain qualities has attained onto that life whose laws and phenomena are exemplified in him "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is called".

There is another and a perplexing aspect of our theme which we may not evade. The New Man, whom we have been trying to identify and describe, exists actually in such rudimentary and incomplete shape, and passes out of life so far from complete. "Some are weak and sickly among you, and some are asleep". What of them? What of the undeveloped child, the feeble-minded and the feeble-souled, that great multitude who, so far as we can see, have been born from above, have the will to love,

but have been so let and hindered in the race set before them that they must needs pass on, if they pass at all, like Richard the hunchback complained that he had been sent into this life, "scarce half made up"? Frankly speaking, I do not believe this difficulty would ever have been felt except for the presence of a meagre and poverty-stricken conception of existence to which an unworthy theology has given currency. Without any warrant of God or of Scripture or the reasonableness of things, it shuts up the whole movement of man within the compass of two stadia, "this life" and "the next". Then it assumes that this one is the period of "probation", within which the final destiny of every living thing is wrought out and fixed. No conceivable interest is served by this narrow and artificial scheme of things except that of logical definition. The New Testament has no such constricted outlook. It deals with realities and has little thought of consistency. Existence is far too large a thing to be seen consistently. The general conception of the New Testament is that the new life of the individual is begun here, and that he passes on, incomplete, into an existence where the same laws of being operate as do through time and space.

Life cannot subsist anywhere without movement, progress. Arrest means disintegration. By what warrant may we confine the successive phases of being to two, or to any number? We are concerned now only with the transit from this one to the next,

but we can only think of the individual as passing on into actual development and real vicissitude. Jesus is bold to make Dives develop morally under the scorching discipline of hell. He becomes there a better man. He reaches the point where he can take thought of his brethren, about whom he had not concerned himself in this life. Even the souls of the " saints under the altar " are morally lacking the while they call upon God for vengeance on their persecutors. The next life must either be a real life, for real persons, with real experience, or else be dismissed as the work of a fever and the delirium of a dream. Human life without moral movement is inconceivable at any stage. It is the law of its being. Where in any case the new life is vigorous and stable enough to persist at all, its rudimentary, feeble, and incomplete forms cannot but move in that direction which is determined by their nature and their choice.

The practical question is a narrower, though maybe not less difficult one.

What is the essential note or mark of the Christian in the world in which we actually live? The opprobrium of Christianity has always been the Christians. May it not be that something has been looked for in them which by their nature is not theirs? The function of the individual Christian in human society has been variously conceived. Is it his task to be a model for conduct? Or to be an active reformer of manners? Or to be an administrator of alms?

Or to be a herald of new truth? He has been praised and blamed equally for taking and for refusing any or all of these rôles. Shall we follow the ascetic and say that the "religious" are they who separate themselves from men and live by rule? Shall we listen to Tolstoi and strip ourselves of property, resent no injury, abjure courts of justice, refuse to bear a sword? Shall we follow the beckoning finger of the sociologist into the study of life with a view of bettering its conditions? Shall we join the philanthropists to distribute bread and provide games? The answer is,—All these things we may or may not do, as the case may be. Christianity is compatible with the doing or the not doing of any of them, but these things are not Christianity.

The Christian is the soul that wills to love. But Love is an affection strong as well as tender. It may be well for the Christian to "sell all that he hath and give to the poor"; or it may be well for him to trade with his ten talents and gain ten other talents. It depends. He may not allow his love to lead him to do mischief. Here, for example, may be a community of poor, living squalidly, lacking bread, crowded together and half sheltered, naked, sick, and cold. In their midst lives one of Christ's family who is rich. But suppose that community has no right to be there at all? Allow that it is collected, held together, by lust, greed, indolence, selfish thriftlessness? Grant that nothing less than

the hard stress of hunger and the discipline of cold will serve to bring it to a better life. What course of action will love point out to the Christian? I mean real love, the love that is solicitous, that wills for its object good rather than pleasure, the love that is strong enough to bear its own anguish of sympathy rather than find relief by opening its hand in largesse. And in what does this situation differ from that of the Son of Man, richly endowed with the power to heal and relieve, surrounded by a world full of sick, palsied, suffering, naked? Ought he to have expended his capital of divine power in indiscriminate healing? Love finds a way; but it must be the way which love illuminates. For Christianity to follow the feeble and essentially selfish way of Tolstoi and his kind would be to transform it from a world force to a transient makeshift. It may well be that the peril most imminent to Christianity to-day is to submit itself to the domination of a soft affection, like that of a soft and foolish mother for a spoiled and exacting child. The law of the Christian's being is indeed to love, even his enemies; to bless even his persecutors; but it must be with a good which works good and not harm to the enemy, a blessing which blesses rather than that works him evil. It must not be forgotten that the whole vocabulary of stern denunciation and judgment current in religious speech was coined by Jesus, and that it sprung from his unbounded love. His "woe

unto you " is as much a part of his message as his " blessed are you ".

Nor may the Christian man or state put aside the sword when that is the weapon to which love points. The Puritans had a fine phrase for the character which they held in honor; he was " faithful even unto slaying ". The angelic message was " peace to men of good will "; not a soft and undiscriminating peace to men who deliberately do ill. Here again, the peril to Christianity may be not from those who too eagerly thrust the sword into its hand so much as from them who cry peace, peace, when there is no peace. There is evil in the world which is to be conquered and exorcised by gentleness; but there is also evil which is to be driven down a steep place and choked. The Christian law is to love his neighbor as himself; neither less nor more. But is one at liberty to love himself so that he may not discipline himself, with stripes if need be? If it be better for him to cut off his right hand or pluck out his right eye if it cause him to offend, shall love for himself hinder? And shall love forbid him to do so much for his neighbor? The widespread delusion which prevails in our time, the distress which many are suffering who would do the Master's will but cannot see the way, arises from a confusion of thought. The policy of the new Kingdom is for them that are within the Kingdom. There it can operate safely, and with incalculable potency. But it is not the law of " the

kingdoms of this earth". If it be attempted to apply it prematurely, or in a region where its spirit which is its dynamic is absent, it becomes the feeble and mischievous rule of doctrinaires. The New Order comes up, lives, multiplies like the old. That one made its appearance amid "the dragons weltering in the prime". It struggled for existence according to the laws of its own nature; but it did not essay to bring the dragons under its law. The kingdoms of this earth are not yet the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ. His method was the successive winning of separate souls, now an Andrew, now a Peter, now a Philip, until he had discovered and won to himself a few men and women fitted to herald and inaugurate a higher and more perfect social life.

It is no doubt true, as is often urged, that good men will not necessarily produce a good society. But it is not true of the kind of men which Christ begets. But they can only produce it in his way. The régime of the Kingdom is not to be promulgated prematurely, nor is it to be expected to function where the conditions are not present. His folk are counselled to be wise as serpents as well as harmless as doves. If they are wise they will not attempt to "restore the kingdom to Israel" at this or any other time. They will live their own immortal lives and quicken ever new lives into their own by contact of life with life. They are to be the salt of the earth. The use of salt is not for shining and arid

blocks to build temples and state houses withal. It does its work by disappearing in the lump to sweeten it. It is leaven, a single cell of which starts a fermentation where it touches. Its manner of life is not that of the mass within which it lives, but its own. When its function is accomplished it finds that it has done its work by dying.

This is also the judgment of the great, wise world in the case. The Christian Church has never undertaken to administer charity without working mischief, or entered the arena of politics without doing evil. When the impatient minister who would hasten the Kingdom enters the region of political action, or social order, or economic arrangement, the world looks after him with a smile or a frown or a shrug or a malediction, as the case may be. Its true instinct tells it that this is not his sphere of action. Its hoarded experience moreover tells it that mischief will come of it. A Christian Socialism, Christian Education, Christian Economics, are phrases which will not bear examination. If one should speak of "Christian" Chemistry, or "Christian" Mathematics, the confusion involved would be obvious, but it exists in the other phrases none the less. Christian men have indeed to do with the activities of life, and must needs go into every region of it. But they do not go for the purpose of overturning the laws which obtain in those regions. Wherever they go they meet beings of their own order, and they transform others into their own likeness by

vital conduct. There is a freemasonry of the spirit which does not exhibit the work of its lodge in the market-place or the legislature. When his friends would have "taken Jesus by force and compelled him to be a king" he departed and hid himself. He continues to do so.

The first and typical Christian is Christ. If one can get free from misconception he will see the marvellous simplicity of that life. He set out neither to seek a cross for himself nor to readjust the world's confusion. He went not a single step out of his path to find a pang of body or soul. Such hurts as might be avoided without missing his purpose were avoided. He met the cross because it stood in his path. He neither sought nor shunned it. Nor did he meddle in any way with institutions or collective terms of evil. Intemperance, cruelty, slavery, injustice, infanticide, divorce, were all around him. They flourish as vigorously yet in heathenesse. Within Christendom he and his kind have wonderfully reduced them, and expect to eradicate them. But what of success has been achieved has been by his method. The organizers of reforms and secretaries of societies have their work to do, and their work is most efficient where the personnel is most Christian, but after all it remains true that the "kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation". The regenerating force in human society has been and is that innumerable company of unknown men and women who have been transformed in the image and likeness

of Christ, who do not cry nor lift up their voices in the street, but quicken the world by simply living their new life. Outwardly they look and act much as other men; but essentially they are new creatures.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

" The idea of One Holy Catholic Church was not early developed in the consciousness of Christendom. In the East this article of the Church does not occur in the creed of Ignatius, A.D. 107, nor in that of Origen in the middle of the third century, nor in the creed of Lucian of Antioch at the beginning of the fourth century. It first appears in the private creed of Arius, 328. The Nicene creed has no article of the Church, but in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan form it appears in its fulness, 'One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.' This point was reached toward the close of four hundred years of Christian thought".—WOOD, " Survivals in Christianity ".

XIII

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

It is plain that Jesus had in mind a church; it is equally plain that the thing which we call the Church is not the thing he had in mind. The difficulty which one confronts at the outset is to find the thing at all. There is no objective reality to which the title "Christian Church" can be applied. There are churches a plenty; but there is no Church. If any one fancy there is, let him ask himself, where is it? Let him point to it, define it, locate it, delimit it. If he urge that the hundreds of organizations called churches are actually the component parts of some great, all-embracing Kingdom, we can only say that he has not stopped to examine the content of his thought. What he has in mind is the picture of an empire which includes within it separate and partially independent states. That conception is a perfectly coherent and legitimate one. It is possible for an empire to be thus constituted; but only on the condition that the constitutive states act harmoniously toward a common end, and that the empire have a conscious will and purpose of its own. But this is precisely what the churches do not do. They

do not act together harmoniously; they confront and oppose each other; they do not work toward a common end, for they do not conceive the purpose the same way; and the universal Church thus imagined has neither a conscious will and purpose of its own nor any organ by which to express it. "The One Holy Catholic Church" is a phrase to which no objective reality corresponds.

In the political sphere we observe a steady movement toward unification, and this movement has been visible for a long time. There are not one-half as many separate governments in the world to-day as there were even a century ago. So far as one can see there is much more immediate prospect of a Universal State than there is of a Universal Church. It is a startling fact that the most potent divisive force at work in Christendom is the churches. All other barriers are easier to overcome, all other schisms easier to heal. This is all the more amazing when we reflect that the dying prayer of its Founder was "that they all may be one". The actual facts are indeed so monstrous that Christians habitually try to disguise them. They fondly imagine an ideal Church at some undefined date or place in the past, whose unity has been broken, but which we may hope to see restored; or that the rivalries are not real rivalries but emulations; or that the Church is essentially an invisible, transcendental thing, not meant to show concretely on earth. But these are only fond imaginings. However they may

satisfy those who nurse them, the great open-eyed world knows better.

Let us examine the situation as it actually is. There is no Christian Church, that is, there is no such world-organization with a conscious mind and will, and organs to give them expression, and there never has been. Instead, we find the ecclesiastical world divided into three great sections, with innumerable subdivisions. Each of these acts not only apart from the others, but acts habitually with a view to thwart, restrain, and overthrow the others. More important still, each has a separate spirit, a different organizing principle The Oriental churches are organized around the principle of Dogma. The object which they place above all others is to hand down through the ages certain formularies which they conceive to express finally the truth concerning Christ. To this end all else is subordinated. They call themselves the "Orthodox" Church. The outcome of this spirit has been what might have been expected, intellectual stagnation and moral impotence. The Eastern Church sits to-day in its tawdry Basilica an embalmed corpse, robed in stiffly embroidered vestments, with a creed in its dead hand, while its people bow before it with the forehead, and hear from its lips no voice which reaches their souls. Its people are devout, ignorant, superstitious; its rulers are orthodox, cruel, punctilious of ecclesiastical form, and lacking in truth and ruth. A keen observer who has had

great opportunity to know has said that "the Russian Empire is really not an empire at all; it is a church, and its qualities are those which the Church has produced." This Church has had a longer continuous life than any other, and so far as one can see, it has in the main missed the spirit and purpose of the Master. In any case it stands remote from the rest of the Christian world, understanding it little, and little affected by it.

The second in order, both historically and geographically, is the Church of Rome. As the Russian Empire is, strictly speaking, not an empire but a church, so this, to be accurate, is not a church but an empire. Its organizing principle is Dominion. Its cardinal claim is Authority; its cardinal virtue is Obedience. Its claim is in no way disguised or mitigated. It asserts itself to be the true and only Church of Christ on earth. Its Pope is God's vicegerent, and is infallible. Within it there is eternal safety; outside it there is no safety. Because Christ has ordained it so, it has authority over every region of human life and action, its only limit being its own judgment not to enter upon any given area. If it does not regulate political or domestic arrangements, it is only because it decides in its own wisdom not to do so, and not because it is without right to do so. Its one aim is domination. To this it adjusts all its power and machinery. Its information is drawn from every quarter of the world. Its ministers and officials are loose-footed janizaries,

who may not take root anywhere in family life, or form human affections which may weaken or hamper their absolute devotion to the organization which they serve. Its characteristic title is "Catholic"; it claims authority over all. It is the old Roman Imperium baptized. It believes that in this fashion it represents Christ's will, and best carries out his intention. Is it right in its claim? Is it likely to succeed?

The first of these inquiries I need hardly stay to answer. But the second is one about which well informed men are slow to form an opinion. Personally I do not believe that any one is warranted in either hoping or fearing that the Roman idea of the Church will prevail. It has within it elements of great potency, as all must see, but has within it also the seeds of its own necessary decay. Looking over its history during the centuries, one is struck by the fact that at the very times and places where its success has been most complete its overthrow has been most imminent. It ought to be borne in mind that this idea of universal dominion was not always held by the Roman Church. It took possession of the organization slowly, but in the end controlled it entirely. Nowhere else in history, probably, has equal patience and sagacity been displayed in working toward the realization of an ideal, and nowhere else more complete and reiterated failure. From the sixth century onward for nearly a thousand years this organization dreamed, planned, prayed, and

fought for dominion over Western Europe. Finally it gained its end. At the opening of the sixteenth century there was none to gainsay its will. King and artisan, scholar and peasant alike were docile subjects of this ecclesiastical empire. But its success was its undoing. Within a century it lost the British Islands, Scandinavia, the most of Germany, with local insurrections throughout its whole domain. Then, with the same infinite patience and skill, it set about the task of reconstruction. Once again it succeeded within a more restricted area in Europe, but replaced the lost territory with a wider empire in Mexico and South America. Three centuries more have gone by, and during them it has lost its rule in Mexico, the South and Central American states, in France, Italy, and Portugal, and with Spain in insurrection. In all these cases, wherever the people have had opportunity to express their will by vote, they have turned against the Church, refused to do her will, restrained her pretensions, secularized her accumulated wealth, expelled her agents, in a word, repudiated her principle of dominion. These things have happened too often and too uniformly to be attributed to accident or to the unruly wills and passions of men or times. They can well be accounted for as the operation of a law which may always be counted upon to show itself when the time is full. Will the same cycle be run in these United States, where the immediate destiny of the world is lodged? One must needs fear it or

hope it, according to his wish. Here is the same ancient claim of dominion,—nothing abated, nothing disguised. Here is the same patience, skill, and devotion in upbuilding. Here is the same semblance of success. Will there be the same revolt and overthrow? And when?

The third segment of the ecclesiastical circle is that ill-defined aggregation which we call Protestantism. The spirit and temper which differentiates it has been in the world always; but in so far as it is organized it dates from the revolt against the Roman claim to domination in the sixteenth century. With it we are more immediately concerned. How nearly does it present Christ's ideal of a Church? What is its outlook? When one studies its history he is impressed by the fact that as an ecclesiastical force it has lost much of its initial energy. It reminds one of the course of a mighty shell fired by an enormous charge. While it held together its momentum was terrific, but as it broke into fragments each fragment possessed less energy. When these in succession subdivided its potential energy became still feebler. The explosive power which impelled it originally was the sense of individual liberty,—liberty of conscience, liberty of thought and speech, liberty of action. When these are restrained or repressed, they gather an ever increasing fulminating energy. But when they are set free, maybe with noise and commotion, they do not always quite know what to do with themselves. This is the condition

of the Protestant churches. They are free, and they do not know what next. Liberty is a dangerous spirit to raise. The only power to control it is Truth. But here they hesitate and fumble. A century ago each one had a Confession or a System of truth which satisfied it. It had a message which, whether true or faulty, it could deliver when challenged. But now the very spirit of intellectual freedom which they invoked has examined these doctrinal structures, and in the name of Truth has rejected them. The result has been to produce a hesitation and sense of uncertainty which bodes ill for Protestantism. It lacks a clear and definite message to heathen and Christian alike. Once it could go to the heathen with a heart full of pity for a man who, it believed, would be consigned to eternal torment in hell if the missionary failed to reach him in time to save. It does not believe that now; but it has not found clearly what motive will take its place and do its work. It would be difficult to find a place where greater disingenuousness prevails than here. Congregations of Christian people are exhorted to labor and give "to carry the Gospel to them that are perishing". With their gifts the missionary machinery of the denomination plants new churches in communities where the Gospel has been proclaimed for years, and where are too many churches already. The motive which is urged is not really the motive which controls. The desire is not really to "carry the Gospel", it is to extend

and aggrandize the ecclesiastical organization. If any Church actually believes that outside itself salvation is not to be found, this appeal is morally worthy, whatever may be said of its reasonableness. But if it does not believe that one shrinks from giving its " missionary " activity a name.

It at least looks as though organized Protestantism were a spent force. It is uncertain and hesitating in its message; its rivalries and consequent wastefulness render it impotent; it has lost the controlling position it once held in colleges and universities; the laboring classes have largely drifted beyond the sound of its voice; the middle classes are less and less attending its services; the great gifts of money which it once received are now being turned in other directions. Its Revival machinery has to a large extent been abandoned. General Booth declares that the Salvation Army as well as other companies which set out with the single aim " to save souls ", tend irresistibly to become instruments for the distribution of secular charity. An ever increasing number who have been counted within the churches are dropping away. It is not because they have been seduced from their old allegiance by a rival, or have become hostile, it is simply because they do not find anything there which satisfies their religious need. In a word, it is not powerful enough as an organization, as Rome is, to be reckoned with in political life. It is too incoherent to speak or act efficiently in the social sphere. It does not, as it

once did, command the enthusiastic service of the religious individual.

From all these things, which are commonplace facts, within the ken of all observant men, it would seem that there is something fundamentally faulty in all the attempts which have been made to realize concretely Christ's ideal of a Church. Where the exhibition of Doctrine is the controlling motive, it ends in Oriental stagnation. Where Dominion is its aim, it runs round within the closed circle of Rome, through growth, power, tyranny, to revolt, and around again. Where Individual Liberty is the goal, it issues in confusion and weakness. Neither Orthodoxy, nor Catholicity, nor Liberty, nor any nice balance and combination of them, can be the notes or tests of the Society which Jesus contemplated.

Against this whole view two objections are likely to be opposed. In the first place, it will be said, the churches are actually strong and vigorous, and are striving mightily to conquer the world for Christ. Their statistics of growth can always be marshalled in such a way as to spell success. Nevertheless, their general course through a long period of time has been as I have set forth. In calculating the line of movement of any body one can only study that portion of its orbit which has been under observation. From that the equation of its curve is calculated, and its destination predicted.

The second objection is, that it is inconceivable that the Divine Founder of the New Kingdom should

have permitted its line of movement to be thus deflected to barren issues. Could he have allowed so long time to be wasted while his people made their mistakes and discovered them? We can only reply by pointing to what is God's actual way of doing things. He permitted nature to run out a myriad of aimless lines before she discovered the one which culminated in Man. How many more æons were seemingly wasted before the New Man was reached? One thing we may be sure of, in the New Kingdom as well as in the old, the members thereof will be allowed to find out and retrace their missteps, let the time be long or short.

For many ages the minds of Christians have turned backward with a sort of helpless yearning toward the "primitive Church". It has been felt that it possessed a secret of power which has in some way fallen out of sight. Probably no equally brief period of time has ever been studied so exhaustively as has the century which followed the disappearance of Jesus. During that time his Society spread with such amazing rapidity, exhibited such a unique life, was so sure of itself, moved toward its purpose with such inexplicable courage, arrested and held the attention of the encompassing world in such a way as to compel the conviction that it knew something which we do not know and wielded some power which the Church to-day does not possess. But the attempt to recover the lost secret has not been satisfactory. May it be possible that we have looked

for the wrong thing? Theologians have scrutinized the records of the Early Church to find out what was its creed. Ecclesiastics have interrogated it to find out its form of organization,—whether it was Presbyterian, Episcopal, or Congregational, whether it recognized this official or that, and which was superior and which subordinate. Liturgists have studied to ascertain whether its rites were performed in this way or that way. Antiquarians have asked it curious questions about its manners and customs. To all these questionings it vouchsafes but a meagre answer. And, what is of more consequence, it answers in a tone which shows that it deemed all these things of small moment. It refuses to say what its doctrine was, or what its policy. Any, or all, or none, of the interpretations put upon it may be correct. But its secret was in none of these things.

There are two conceptions of a church. One is that it is an Organization, in form analogous to a political State, but in spirit and purpose religious. It is a State which includes in it all sorts of citizens, a few who are intelligently loyal and devoted, and many who accept its citizenship and share its benefits and protection passively, without thought, by force of habit. It includes good citizens and bad. Its terms of naturalization are intentionally adjusted to admit and to include all save those who have shown themselves dangerous to the body politic. Most of its members are such by the accident of birth within its frontiers. It is simply human society ordered

in one way for religious life, as it is ordered in a different way for secular life. According to this view, the ideal Church in any country would be one which is exactly conterminous with the State, and of which every inhabitant is *ex-officio* a member. In its perfect form the Christian Church and the Christian State would be identical. The distinction between sacred and secular would disappear. This is in fact the conception of the Church which holds the field. It is true that its ideal is not realized, the Church is broken and divided, but each separate portion acts after the manner of a state; fixes the terms of citizenship; counts all born within it as members; admits, rejects, expels, as it judges proper. It makes or unmakes citizens according to its own rules. But the goal toward which all these petty religious states look is a time when they shall have negotiated terms of consolidation, and shall be fused together in one great Christian Church which will include all the people. Was this the consummation which Jesus had in mind when he projected his Church? Would such a religious commonwealth be the Church of Christ?

There is another conception which is drawn from quite a different sphere of human life and action. According to it the Church is not a state but a *family*. It is constituted of individuals whose bond of union is altogether unlike that which binds together citizens in a commonwealth. Its members are related by blood, bound together by a common kinship,

cemented by an affection. This affection springs from their antecedent kinship. This Family is in the world, but not of it. It increases and multiplies by its own methods. As such, it has no concern with the secular life in the midst of which it lives. It has its own ideals, its own activities, and finds its own satisfactions. It is not an organization, but an organism; not an aggregation, but a brotherhood.

Now, it is commonly assumed that these two conceptions of the Church can live and act at the same time; that it can be at once a state and a family; that it can expand according to the ways of a state, and at the same time grow according to the ways of a biological kingdom. This cannot be. A thing cannot at the same time grow like a plant and be built like a house. The two modes of being are incompatible. To merely recognize this confusion of thought would go far toward setting the Church in the way to correct its practical confusions.

The first Christians thought little about a church, one way or the other. They thought of themselves as a family, each member of which felt within himself the thrill of a new life. They were "alive in Christ"; they had been "born again"; made "new creatures"; "old things had passed away and all things had become new" for them. They were bound together in this new spiritual kinship. It constituted a relationship closer than friendship or even common blood. So completely did it take possession of them that they had all things in common;

neither did any count anything his own. They sold all their possessions and brought the proceeds to the Apostles' feet for distribution among "the brethren". Their motive had nothing in common with that which produces "Socialism". Nor was it anything like "love of mankind", or "realization of a common humanity". They took no account of mankind as such. As a fact they were denounced by their contemporaries as haters of mankind. When they spoke of "the brethren", "the faithful", "the saints", they meant those individuals, many or few, who shared with them the new life. When they preached their message was "the resurrection and the new life". They imparted this life by personal contact. When the divine spark was kindled in any one he was baptized and numbered with the disciples. He was baptized *because*, as St. Peter said of Cornelius and his friends, "they have received the Holy Spirit even as we". There was no doctrinal test at all, in our sense of the word. There was no moral test save the evidence of the new life. Nor by that did they mean any superior morality, but only the new spirit, which they confidently expected to produce Christlike conduct. They met together in affectionate family groups for the breaking of bread. Such rites as they had were simple and natural. Such officials as they had were not sharply distinguished from the rest of the brethren. Their aim was to spread a new kind of life, not to organize and extend an institution. Their im-

mediate success was the most wonderful thing in human history. Under the same conditions the missionary machinery and the missionary motive of to-day would have been as impotent as the attempt to create a man by steam power.

This " Brotherhood of the New Life " in that form passed out of sight with the end of the first century, like a western river disappears in the sand. For nearly two centuries thereafter almost nothing is known concerning it. When it emerges again in the light of history, its Gospel had become " Christianity ". The upper room where the family group had broken bread together had been expanded into the gorgeous Basilica; the elder had become the Pontiff; the simple Communion meal had become a mysterious sacramental Function; instead of little companies bound together in affection we find great congregations, strangers to one another; instead of " the brethren " it now embraces the population of the empire, from the Emperor down; instead of a band of brothers sharing their possessions with each other we find a Church with imperial endowments. It has a hierarchy, liturgies, canons, creeds, disciplines. In a word, the society which passed out of sight a spiritual brotherhood reappears a religious empire. Was this a development or transformation?

For a brief period the Ecclesiastical State preserved a political unity, identified with the unity of the empire. But presently the empire fell to

pieces, and the Church broke up with it. From that time to this the political conception of the Church continued; notwithstanding there has been no time—not even a single day—when one could point to any organization and say, this, or this, is the Church. Now, at the beginning of this twentieth century since Christ, multitudes of good men are profoundly dissatisfied with the situation. Their quarrel is not with this church or that one, with this dogma or that one; they hold aloof from them all. They hold Christ in unfeigned reverence. They are not sure whether or not they accept the definitions of him set forth in the formularies. They do not feel sure that they could define him any better, but they are sure they would define less. They possess the same spirit which was in him, some of them to a pre-eminent degree. But they have no use for a church. In Catholic countries they firmly refuse to yield it the personal submission which it demands. There are indications, moreover, that the attitude of passive aloofness which they have maintained for a long time is changing into active impatience and hostility. In Protestant communities they refuse to acknowledge the divine sanction of any church. To speak frankly, the things about which they see the churches busying themselves appear to them to be paltry and unreal. Their rites seem archaic and conventional, their teaching either unintelligible or disingenuous. They gauge accurately the real influence of the churches in practical affairs, and they hold the

opinion that the controlling motive of each one is to exploit society in its own interest. This is the class with which the churches must reckon. It is one which has never before been confronted on a large scale. Now it is increasing with enormous rapidity. One may say that its presence is the characteristic feature of the religious situation. Among it is a very large proportion of the leaders in every region of life, managers of affairs, administrators of charities, educators, governors of states, college professors, editors of newspapers, judges, legislators, farmers, teachers, mechanics. The rate of increase of this class is many times greater than the churches' increase.

The primitive conception of the Church has never perished. It has been oversloughed by the political imagery employed, but it has always persisted. Christians still speak of each other as "brethren", even in circumstances where the epithet is less than appropriate. They still have a definition of the real Church which they never apply to any actual one, the "Blessed Company of all Faithful People". The language which they spontaneously use at the times of deepest devotion always echoes the original thought. At Baptism the terms used to indicate the meaning of the transaction are biological terms: "regenerated", "grafted into the body of Christ's Church". They are terms which would be meaningless in any political sense. They throw back to a time when the Church thought in those terms.

They speak of "being received as God's Child by adoption", "dying unto sin", "living unto righteousness", and such like. In the other Sacrament the same ideas lie at bottom. Its terms and symbols are vital, not political ones. And for this reason, that, as things are, at that Table and there only the real Church is encountered. It speaks its own mother-tongue because there are no strangers present. Was it wise for it ever to attempt to speak a universal language?

Here, then, would seem to be the key to the whole perplexing situation. The Church of Jesus Christ began as a new Family in the world. It was meant to grow according to its own laws of reproduction. For a time it did so. Eventually, even if slowly, it would have absorbed and assimilated all from among men who are ready to "be born again". But the process was slow, costly, painful. When the pain was at the heaviest the Emperor of the world offered it "all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them". The wearied Church accepted. Instead of transforming the world, the world transformed it. Thus did "the fatal gift of Constantine" seduce and mislead the Bride of Christ.

But if this be true in any real sense, what is there for the Church to do? Can she retrace her stumbling steps back to the fourth century, find the place where the path branched, and start anew along the other road? We may be quite sure she will not do this except as a last resort. The dream of being a world

power has been too long entertained for that. The habit of reckoning success by numbers has become a second nature. So long as by any means the figures may be made to show increase of numbers the habit will continue. But there are indications from every quarter that she will be compelled to retrace her steps and resume her old ideal.

Few realize how profound is the revolution which has occurred during late times in the relation between the Church and organized society. In Constantine's time Christianity was made the official religion of the State. From that time onward, for fifteen hundred years, the State built churches, maintained them, constrained the people to attend them. This came to be everywhere regarded as the natural as well as the divine order of things. The force of statutes, the resources of taxation, the power of the common law, could all be appealed to in the interest of the Church. This condition remained until the United States, the first government in the world to do so, decreed in her constitution that " no law should be made concerning religion ". The far-reaching consequences of that provision were probably not dreamed of by any man then living. It started that movement now almost complete, to take from the Church's hand the staff upon which she has leaned throughout almost the whole of her journey. When the Church asked for liberty, for " the separation of Church and State ", she little realized what effect it would have upon her own fortunes.

That effect has been long in showing itself. Long after the State withdrew its support, society from use and wont continued to do through pressure of custom and public opinion that which law had formerly compelled. We have now about reached the point where public opinion follows the constitution. We are in spite of ourselves being pushed, or led, back to the position of the primitive Church. That asked nothing of the powers of this world except to be let alone. It was a voluntary association of the men of the new life, living and acting in the midst of a society which took no account of it or its rules, except as they were won, one at a time, to submit themselves to the new Way. But when the State offered its powerful aid they gratefully fell into its arms. Now the Emperor has abandoned the Church which he seduced.

In proportion as the churches realize and accept the situation will they find the path clear, though no doubt painful. But if the path is to be found it must be by those who have become free from the dogmatic and imperial spirit of Constantine's age. Indeed it is most unlikely that the churches, acting officially, will ever escape from the evil case into which they are rapidly falling. So far as one can see, the Roman Church has so completely identified herself with the idea of dominion that to abandon it would be suicide. It may even be probable that for a time her gain may be great by reason of the migration to her of those who have felt after the

same ideal in Protestantism without finding satisfaction. But even so, the obstacles in the way of her realizing her dream are multiplying as time goes on. Her ultimate failure is inevitable from the nature of things. For the same reason the Anglican churches which affect to maintain a nice balance between two incompatible conceptions of what the Church is, must dwindle by the dropping away of those who find no satisfaction in either of them. So also, the separate Protestant churches appear to be each one so compactly organized around its particular confession and so bound to its own Church by sentiment that no formal action is likely to be taken. But is it still too much to expect that the *disjecta membra* of the Christian fraternity may draw together and become a Church such as Jesus had in mind? Such a Church, pretending to be nothing but what it is, with the sad experience of the centuries to enlighten it, would find Church Unity a thing already achieved. Its creed, discipline, and ministry would arrange themselves, for they would be, as they were originally, the natural and spontaneous expression of its life. No doubt they would be much the same as they have always been, but they would occupy a different and far less conspicuous place than is now accorded them. Its creed would, maybe, be less precise, but more alive; its ministry less prominent and more serviceable; its discipline not that of rules and canons, but that in-

exorable law by which living things choose and reject among the things they touch.

Such a Church would be undisturbed by the exodus now going on. It would see it for what it actually is, namely the automatic correction of a census maintained long upon a false basis. It would not be disturbed by the withdrawal of that great multitude who have gone out from it because they were really not of it. For such a Church many souls are waiting. Good men, like those I have instanced above, do not stand aloof from the Church as it is now because it is too religious, but because it is not religious enough. They would greet with sober ardor a Church which offered them a share in the new and abiding life in Christ, and which took no thought for itself at all. For Jesus' dictum is as true for a Church as for a man, "whoso humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased".

THE SUM OF THE WHOLE MATTER

"*Later on*,—My creed has melted away, but I believe in good, in the moral order, and in salvation; religion for me is to live and die in God, in complete abandonment to the holy will which is at the root of nature and destiny. I believe in the Gospel, the Good News—that is to say, faith in the love of a pardoning Father". —Amiel, *Journal*.

XIV

THE SUM OF THE WHOLE MATTER

A LARGE portion, and by no means the worst, of the world to-day is dissatisfied with its religion. It is not less but more anxious to find some outlet for its devotion, some guide for its life, some answer to its obstinate questionings, than at any previous time. Parents stand hesitatingly before their children, and do not know what they ought to teach them. They are more and more reluctant to confide them to the Sunday school, for there, they believe, they will be taught a host of things which are not true, and they dread the time when the children shall discover, as they themselves have, that they are not true. Tens of thousands of men and women who used to attend church habitually no longer do so. Every Christian minister sees and deplores this falling away. No statistics or census reports will disguise the fact. Church statistics are worth less than nothing. One, for example, reports simply "Catholic Population", that is, the number who, in its judgment, ought to belong to it. Others report by name and number the additions, and only guess at the lapses and losses. It is probably speaking within bounds to say that not one parish in ten

could find and locate one-half the number of members it reports. Even with this method of enumeration one of the most vigorous of churches, the Protestant Episcopal, reports [1] for 1910 a net gain of only two per cent. in members; an increase of 51 in Confirmations for a communicant list of 800,000; an actual decrease in Baptisms and Marriages. No doubt other churches would make a similar showing.

It would be an error to refer this falling away to increasing luxury, or dissipation, or satisfaction with secular life. In the first place, the loss is greater among the working classes than among the well to do. Beside that, the religious interest of the masses is shown by the eager way in which they snatch at any other answer offered to the riddle of life. When Professor Haeckel's "Riddle of the Universe" appeared a few years ago, two hundred thousand copies were sold in a single year. It and books like it, are welcomed and read, not because they fortify unbelievers in their denials, but because they provide some answer, poor, thin, and disheartening as it is, to the demands which Christianity as presented does not satisfy. What, then, is it which Christianity, when stripped of all extraneous and superfluous matter, has to say to the soul which seeks to know? The substance of the reply may be stated somewhat as follows:

The controlling principle of Jesus' teaching and

[1] Whittaker's Almanac.

living is that the essential quality of the being whom he calls "Father" is love. He presents him, not as a great king conducting the complex affairs of a great empire, nor as a creator constructing and regulating the complicated movement of the universe, but rather as some venerable and benignant Oriental sheik. He has children and descendants beyond count, and in their veins his own blood flows. But as they have multiplied they have moved away from and become unmindful of their father and of their kinship with each other. This fact weighs, an eternal burden, on the patriarch's heart. They are indifferent to him, and they quarrel with one another. No machinery, no law or threat of penalty can reach the situation. The one thing, and the only thing which can bring harmony out of the confusion of existence is the restoration of the family affection.

But it is plain that this cannot be brought about by compulsion. The verb to love has no imperative mood. God can no more compel a man to love him than can a man compel the affection of his wife or neighbor. Nor are arguments of any more avail. Love laughs at reasons. This is why both Theology and Ethics are impotent. Theology addresses itself to the intelligence, and Ethics to the conscience, whereas it is the affections which are primarily concerned. "My son, give me thine heart" is the burden of God's speech. The very most that Theology as a science can do is to make it appear probable

that the nature and action of God in the universe is thus and so. But the crucial point at which it signally breaks down is in the attempt to convince that the God of thought has a heart. A candid survey of the actual facts of life leaves one in doubt as to whether the world is controlled by a Power who wishes well, or wishes ill, or is utterly indifferent to the fortunes of men. Looking at the course of history in the large it is possible, no doubt, to discern in its movement "a power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness". It is possible, but it is not inevitable. For, while it is true that a steady progress in goodness and gentleness can be seen from time to time in this or that people, or race, or epoch, still, even these appear to be arrested at last by the stronger force of age and decline.

Even were it possible to establish the fact that the race is being steadily led forward in goodness, there is nothing to show that the Power which leads it has either hate or ruth for the individual. The old ditty has in it the concentrated experience of the ages,—

> "As I walked by myself, I talked to myself,
> And thus myself did say to me;
> 'Look to thyself, and take care of thyself,
> For nobody cares for thee'.
>
> "Then I turned to myself, and I answered myself
> In the selfsame reverie;
> 'Look to thyself, or look not to thyself,
> The selfsame thing will be'".

The most that any Ethical system can do, on the other hand, is to express an opinion, more or less weighty, that men ought to act toward each other thus and so. It may well be doubted whether men have ever been appreciably influenced by any scientific presentation of Morals. From Confucius and Aristotle down to Bernard Shaw, the moralist has been a speculator in abstractions. His achievement is only to take a certain number of "oughts" and "ought nots" already present in human society, arrange them in the symmetrical way which he fancies, expound their relationships, and—with scant success—try to trace their origin, and get them put in practise. There is no motive power in ethics, whether as a judgment formed by the individual, or as a compulsion imposed from without.

Not that Theology and Ethics are useless. The intelligence which craves knowledge, even of the unknowable, both will and ought to seek its satisfactions. The moral conduct of men needs regulation from day to day, and society must control it, with what knowledge it can gather from any quarter. But neither of these have to do, except indirectly, with Christ's scheme of things. They do not function in that area of life in which he moves.

It is commonly assumed that the disturbing element in life is that thing which we call Sin. But this is not Christ's view. It is most significant that while he lived he offended the moralist and the conventionally religious by what they thought to be

the laxity of his moral judgments. Publicans and sinners were his daily companions. The woman surprised in the very act of the capital crime against social morals was rescued by him from her accusers, and dismissed with a kindly warning. The leman of Simon the Pharisee received from him no harsher judgment than "she sinned much because she loved much". On the other hand, Dives, whom he consigned to the torments of hell, had not actively sinned at all. The Scribes and Pharisees whom he denounced unsparingly were probably men of exemplary life.

His contention from first to last is that the evil in life is not sin but Selfishness. It would probably be more true to say that he reached down to the fundamental truth that all sin is at bottom selfishness. There is really no other sin. All offences are, when analyzed, seen to be but allotropic forms of this one. Lust, for example, is but the desire to possess, without regard to the good of the thing possessed. Hate is but the cold determination to rid oneself of the person whose existence disturbs his sense of well being. Its final expression is murder, for, as Shylock says, "hateth any man the thing he would not kill"? Theft is selfishness pure and simple. So of all other immoralities whatsoever, they are but expressions of love of self. Christianity, on the other hand, is Altruism. But it is altruism made dynamic. The amazing thing is that it should have ever been presented as self-seeking raised to its

highest power, and given the sanction of religious obligation. For what else is the exhortation to the individual to "seek salvation", to "save his soul"? And what other motive impels the monk and the recluse to withdraw from the world of affections in the hope of finding his own highest good? Jesus' dictum —which is not a paradox—is "he that saveth his life shall lose it". It is the fundamental law of the Kingdom.

Filled with his Father's spirit,—and it is little wonder that with this well beloved son he was well pleased,—he enters human society. As he moves up and down among men, he finds them that are spiritually akin to him and to each other. Of these his Kingdom forms itself. It is a relationship not only deeper, but more real than that of race, or blood, or any other tie whatsoever. "Then came his mother and his brothers, and standing outside the throng they called for him. And when they told him, Behold thy mother and thy brothers are outside seeking for you, he answered and said, Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever will do the will of my Father, he is my brother and my sister". What the will is of which he spoke is plain from the whole story. The Parable of the prodigal son is his portrait of his Father. The Sermon on the Mount is the pronunciamento of his Kingdom. It is "love". "Love, even your enemies; do good; do good even to them that persecute you". His King-

dom therefore has its place, not in the realm of knowledge, or morals, but in the affections.

Now, it will probably not be gainsaid that this is the primary article in Christ's religion,—in theory. But there are two obstinate difficulties which must be overcome before one can consent to subscribe to it and enroll himself. The first is: "All this is fair and gracious; it is no doubt true in that region which you call the eternal realities, but our lives are to be lived on the surface of the world as we find it. In human life, as it actually exists, to adopt this attitude toward one's fellows is neither practicable nor safe; practically it could only issue in the disorganization of society and the obliteration of the individual who orders his life thus". What can be answered to this?

Jesus' answer is: "It is practicable, for I have done it; it may or may not be safe, as the case may be". When it is once admitted that sincere good will on the part of each man toward every other man would transform this world from a bad place to live in to a good one, the question of its practicability will of necessity take a subordinate place. The thing which is good, and which men know to be good, will in the long run prevail. But the run is a very long one indeed. At the stage of the race where we now are it seems as though the goal would not be reached within any measurable time.

Let us say, then, that our word "love" is, maybe, too strong a term to use for that temper toward

one's fellows which Christ prescribes. As a rule, we reserve that word for one supreme and imperious affection. "Well-disposed" is a more accurate expression. The benediction is to "men well-willed". The affectional attitude of the Christian toward all men does not in any wise preclude him from those personal and intimate affections which constitute his own life. Every man is not called upon, for example, to love his neighbor's wife as his own. Nor is he at liberty to ignore moral differences, and be pleased with the saint and the harlot alike. What is demanded is that he shall recognize his kinship with all his Father's children, and do for each what is the real best, not, maybe, the thing which his brother wants, but the thing which is best for him. To love one's neighbor as himself does not mean to love him in ways in which one has no business to love himself. That this is practicable has been proven experimentally ever since the first starving cave-dweller shared his bone with a hungry neighbor, or drove away with his club the marauding vagabond who would snatch his children's food.

If one shall say, then, "Is this all? Is Christianity simply to do good to one's fellows"? the answer is, "Yes; this is all". "For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Verily I say unto you that inasmuch as

ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me ".

But let no one mislead himself. Because this way of life is simple it is not easy. The most abstruse creeds and the most exacting codes are far easier. The person one is called upon to feed may be disagreeable in his manners; the stranger who asks to be taken in may be just the man who has done one grievous wrong; the sick man's sickness may be infectious; the man one is called to visit in jail may be the very one who defrauded him before he was sentenced. The difficulty is very great indeed. If I love my enemy, I put myself at his mercy. If I disarm while my opponent holds his sword in hand, he may run me through. If I allow myself to be solicitous about the food and shelter of my neighbors, I must withdraw just so much time and energy from my own affairs. If all men, even within a limited area, could be brought to begin this manner of life simultaneously, it might be possible, but how am I to begin alone?

Christ's answer is, the way to begin is to begin. He does not pretend to disguise the possible cost. Indeed it would seem as though he had pointed to every conceivable peril which might daunt the courage of disciples. He forewarned them that they should be hated and persecuted; that men would say all manner of evil concerning them; that they would be cast out of the world's synagogues, and maybe killed. And they were. And so was he. But he as-

sured them that not a hair of their heads would be wasted. There is no such thing as ultimate waste in any of God's Kingdoms. But all the same, the goal toward which any kingdom moves is reached without any regard to seeming prodigality. This is to be said, however, the Kingdom is now so well established, and comprehends so many individuals, that its law of life has to a large extent been welcomed by the environing world. There is little danger now and here of the lions or the stake. Few men now adopt the law of Selfishness as their guiding principle. Competition is surely disappearing even from regions where it controlled for ages. Indeed the extraordinary phenomenon is now being seen,—the principle of competition invoking the aid of national law to guarantee for it its old place in commerce!

Still, it is true and will for ages be true, that Christ's Way is so arduous that it will not be adopted without some imperious sanction. This sanction he provides when he makes it the way of Life,—not of happiness, but of existence. Sin is Selfishness; but selfishness, when complete, ends in the extinction of its subject. As the circle of a selfish life contracts into an ever smaller circumference, it tends to become at last only a point, and finally to vanish. This is the process through which a soul is destroyed. It perishes of self-seeking. Infinite selfishness is soul suicide. "For he that loveth not abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in

him". Because such a soul will not help, and is therefore useless for the eternal Father's purpose, it is allowed to follow its own chosen way to extinction, where it can no longer hinder. Allowed to do so? There is no power in the universe which can prevent it except itself.

Over against this the same force operates in the opposite direction. He that spendeth findeth. The outgoing of the soul in love and good will, so far from dissipating and weakening its own energies, enhances and fortifies them. The affections are the only human faculty incapable of exhaustion. Every other has its breaking strain. Thought grows weary with work; the emotions when stimulated too far become obtunded; but love never tires. Many a man has found, to his surprise, and maybe to his consternation, that when he begins a task of charity he becomes entangled in it. It overmasters him. It draws him out and on to issues larger than he had contemplated; and it does so because through it his own being grows larger and stronger. "For every one that loveth is begotten of God. He that abideth in love abideth in God. And what shall it profit a man if he shall gain even the whole world, and lose himself in the doing of it"? In other words, only he that loves lives.

This automatic force is the "Fan in the hand" of the Son of Man, winnowing forever, separating the chaff from the grain on the world's threshing floor. Thus the Kingdom is being builded. Who

belong to it? They who will well to their fellows. Where is it to be seen? Ideally it ought to be conterminous with the Church. Actually it is not so. Some time, we may hope, it will be so, as the Master contemplated. But candor compels the sad confession that before that time the Church must learn to love. Organizations learn that far more slowly than persons do. There is a great multitude whom no man could number within those societies which we call churches, who would gladly walk together in unity and live as brethren in one house, but who are let and hindered in doing so because their organizations, as such, have not the mind of Christ. Instead of humbling, they exalt themselves. Instead of considering each the things of another, each seeks the things of its own. It could not be otherwise, since for these many centuries they have thought of the Kingdom as resting upon a Creed or a Code. These are regarded as completing the essential equipment of a church. The stuff of which that is built is not supplied by the understanding or the conscience, but the heart. So comes the paradox that a church whose members generally are " children of the Kingdom " may as an organization exhibit precisely those phenomena which the law of the Kingdom condemns. It may act toward other churches as no Christian would think of acting toward another Christian. In a word, it is loveless. Whether it be true or not that " corporations have no souls ", it is approximately true that churches have no hearts. They act

indeed amazingly like corporations. The chief end, to which all else is subordinated, is extension, increase, success. If their doctrine and discipline be consistent and efficient, they fancy themselves secure.

He who listens attentively to the multitudinous voices of our world of to-day will learn that it is well disposed toward a revival of religion. But it must be a religion which will satisfy its real longings. Its *mind* has been for two or three generations stimulated to a preternatural activity. It already begins to show symptoms of that lassitude which fatigue produces. It is ready to turn away for a while from education and business to religion. It is no longer in the mood to be moved by a religion of thought or a religion of rules. It is not much interested in "being saved"; but it is deeply concerned to be "going about doing good". It is feeling the compulsion of "Christ in the midst of the ages". But because the phenomena of Love are vastly more difficult to organize than those of thought and conscience, they are looked at askance by those who would translate the Kingdom into some well-rounded and articulate institution. The energy of the Christian world tends steadily to escape from their institutions and to express itself in good will. Why should not the Church recognize in this the working of a true instinct? Why should it refuse any longer to make this spirit in the individual the condition, *and the only condition,* of membership? Does it not in its actual practice expose itself to the rebuke which

the disciple met when he forbade a man to cast out devils " because he followeth not with us "? Or those others who would have kept foolish little children from him? Is there a church on earth to-day which will open its gates hospitably to the man who can only say that he wills well to his fellows, and that in the Son of Man he recognizes a Son of God? And if it be true that of such as these are the Kingdom of Heaven, how can the Church, lacking them, represent the Kingdom?

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